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THE JOURNAL OF COMPUTER GAMING



INFOCOM'S LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS

Year in Review

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SSI™

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FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

Activision, Inc.
P.O. Box 7286
Mountain View, CA 94039
(415) 960-0410

HOWARD THE DUCK: Adventure on Volcano Island: Activision hopes that the arcade adventure fares better than the movie. Although this is primarily an arcade game, it does have a story line (not the movie version, either) and different objectives for each of the four difficulty levels in the game. Howard must avoid obstacles like the infamous puddles of goo (was David Letterman on the design team?) and the dreaded yellow Mutant Mounds. If mutants emerge from the mounds before the little guy can stomp the mounds closed, the player gets to test out Howard's title as Master of Quack Fu. At the Expert level, Howard must successfully parachute into the Dark Overlord's volcano base, avoid the hazards and destroy the sinister alien(well, there had to be at least one tip of the hat to the movie). Apple, C-64/128. Circle Reader Service Card #1.

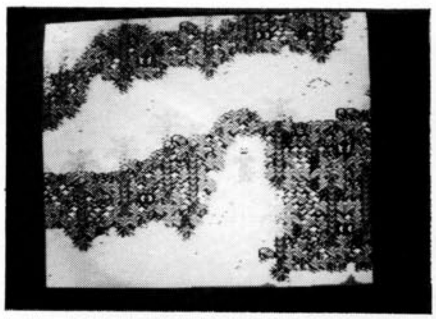
TRANSFORMERS: Battle to Save the Earth: The despicable Decepticons are attempting to drain all of the earth's energy by adapting nine strategic locations to their diabolical ends. The game has a similar appearance and feel to Epyx's G. I. Joe game in that the player assigns characters from the animated television show to deploy at various "hot spots" on the map and defeat the villains by means of an arcade style contest. The introduction sequence is very interesting because the overview of the game is given by means of cartoon show graphics and a digitized voice-over which explains the mission (should you decide to accept it!). Those who enjoy the television series should enjoy the opportunity to control their favorite Autobots from the show. C-64/128. Circle Reader Service Card #2.

SHANGHAI: Derived from the ancient oriental game of Mah Jongg, this is a computer puzzle program designed to be played solitaire. The game consists of 144 tiles with seven suits printed on them. The tiles are stacked in a five level dragon-shaped pyramid. Tiles must be removed in pairs and each tile can be matched by three other tiles. The object is to remove all of the tiles. Because the tiles are randomly shuffled prior to play, each game is different. If you're not sure you'll like it, the company is offering a trial disk by writing at the above address and enclosing $3.00 for shipping and handling. Apple, Amiga, Atari ST, C-64/128, IBM PC and PCjr, Macintosh, and Tandy 1000. Circle Reader Service Card #3.

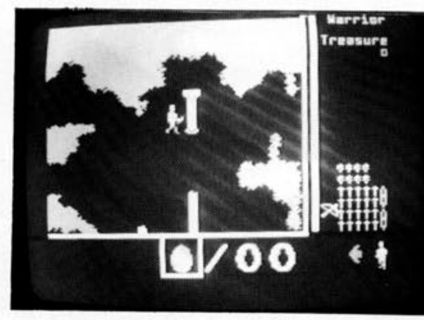
Aegis Development
2210 Wilshire Blvd. #277
Santa Monica, CA 90403
(213) 392-9972

ARAZOK'S TOMB: In this graphic adventure game, the player takes on the identity of an ace reporter, searching for his lost love in the woods of New Galloway, Scotland. Of course, the exotic location is simply an excuse to lure you into the ruins of an ancient Druid temple. Since there is a super-

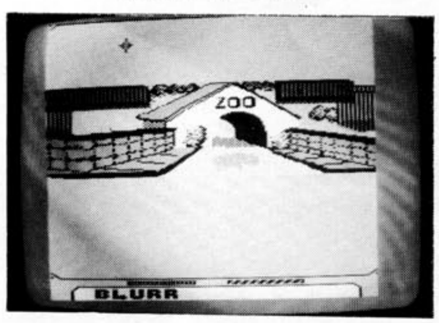
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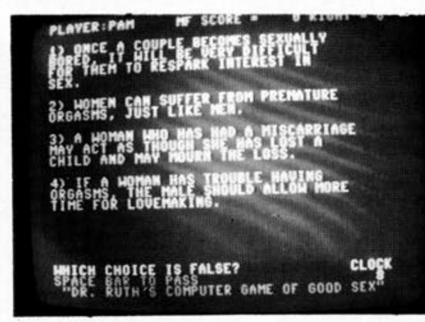
Howard The Duck



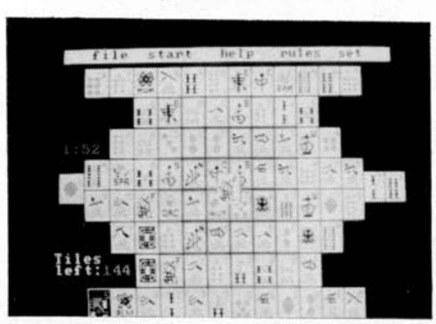
Gemstone Healer



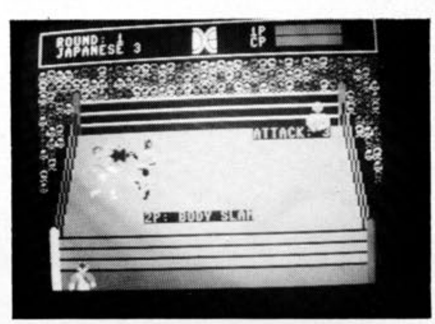
Transformers



Dr. Ruth's Good Sex



Shanghai



Tag-Team

natural gateway in the temple, this isn't simply an "explore the dungeon" adventure. The adventure is enhanced with digitized speech. The program is intended to be an experiment in terror, so a Parental Guidance warning is printed on the packaging. Macintosh. Circle Reader Service Card #4.

Analytical Profiles, Inc.
P. O. Box 12635
Pittsburgh, PA 15241
(412) 833-9664

A. P. PARTYMAKER: Computers have long been recognized for having the capacity to collate data, analyze it, and present a summary of the information in an easily digestible form. This program is an attempt to accomplish this with personality data and facilitate social intercourse with the various interactive responses. With its capacity for providing a Sensual Forecast, Biorhythms, Personal Analysis, and prediction of how the subject will be in the next week, the program should be a real conversational catalyst. The program seems inconsistent at times, however. IBM. Circle Reader Service Card #5.

Avalon Hill Microcomputer Games
4517 Hartford Road
Baltimore, MD 21214

DR. RUTH'S COMPUTER GAME OF GOOD SEX: This is a fast moving quiz game for one to seven players. The game, based on Avalon Hill's successful board game, consists of true-false questions with four possible answers and multiple choice questions. There are also bonus questions based on actual queries to Dr. Westheimer. Points are scored for each correct and incorrect answer based on the time left on the clock. Apple, C-64/128, and IBM. [For the humorous, but adult-oriented "Taking A Peek" on this game, send a self addressed stamped envelope to CGW. Mark the envelope "Good Sex Review". The review will come in an unmarked plain envelope.] Circle Reader Service Card #6.

Broderbund Software, Inc.
17 Paul Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903-2101
(415) 479-1700

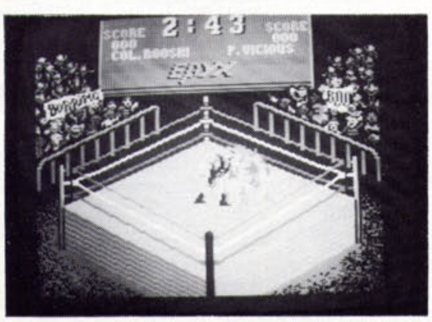
AIRHEART: This is an arcade adventure designed by the author of Choplifter. The story-line involves awakening the heir to a lost kingdom from suspended animation and enabling him to reclaim his kingdom from his father's enemies. In order to awaken the prince, the hero (who is to be named Airheart if he emerges victorious) must guide his weathered jet sled through an ingenious series of robot defenses (placed there to protect the Prince and prove the hero's wor-



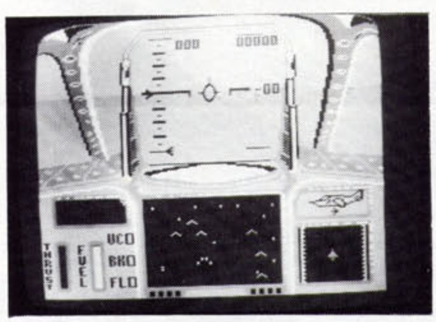
Robot Rascals



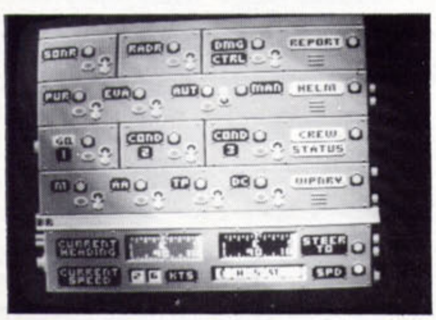
Movie Monster Game



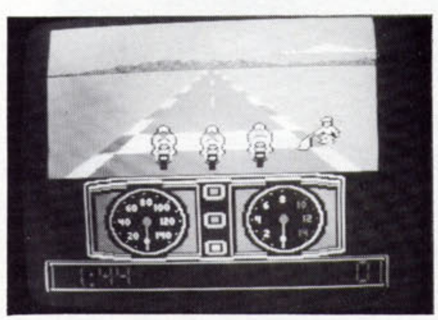
Champ Wrestling



High Roller



Destroyer



Super Cycle

thiness). If the hero can obtain, in turn, the sword, goblet and harp from the ancient king's treasure, the Spirit Guardians will allow the hero to fight the final battle and liberate the Prince from his protective narcolepsy. Apple IIe/IIc (128K and joystick req.). Circle Reader Service Card #7.

Data East USA, Inc.
470 Needles Dr.
San Jose, CA 95112
(408) 286-7074

TAG-TEAM WRESTLING: If you liked the game when it was a coin-operated arcade hit, you'll probably like the home computer version. The graphics are fluid and printed commentary is displayed on the screen like speech or thought balloons in the comic strips. The same body slams, drop kicks, back-breakers, flying head butts and pins from the arcade version are present in this home edition. C-64/128. Circle Reader Service Card #8.

Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 571-7171

ROBOT RASCALS: With this release, Dan Bunten demonstrates his remarkable creativity with multi-player games and answers the perennial question, "What should we play when my friends come over?" RR is a two to four player game which is half card game and half computer game. Each game comes with two decks of cards: one is an attractive multi-colored deck of Item Cards and the other is black and white line art on yellow Luck Cards. Each player selects a robot character to search the computer environment for the items pictured on the cards in their hand. In addition to the strategic scavenger hunt taking place on screen, the players experience a fast-moving card game (refereed by the program, of course) which contains lots of card swapping (a la Pit, Old Maid, Authors, or Uno to name some of the classics). The robot caricatures are delightful and the graphics are up to EA's usual high standards. Apple and C-64/128. Circle Reader Service Card #9.

Epyx
P. O. Box 8020
Redwood City, CA 94063
(415) 366-0606

CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: For every Saturday morning wrestling aficionado, here's an arcade game which has all your favorite moves. You can use headlocks, flying drop kicks, spin kicks, airplane spins, turnbuckle punches, turnbuckle kicks, pile drivers, body slams, atomic drops, and suplexes, as well as standard punches and kicks. One or two players can take their choice of the following genteel personae: K. C. Colossus, Purple Hays, Colonel Rooski, Prince Vicious (wasn't he a punk rock star?), Zantoklaw, Zeke Weasel, The Berserker or Howling Manslayer. C-64/128. Circle Reader Service Card #10.

DESTROYER: You are placed in command of a Fletcher Class Naval Destroyer in this simulation. The graphic presentation is impressive since the program uses 10 separate screens with changing visual displays related to the status of the game. For instance, the Sonar and Radar displays are separate screens which must be checked regularly for status updates. Both look like authentic screens. The Bridge display is also remarkably realistic. The game plays very fast in a real time mode. C-64/128. Circle Reader Service Card #11.

THE MOVIE MONSTER GAME: If you've ever wanted to direct your own "B" horror movie, this game will give you your chance. The arcade action isn't as exciting as <u>Mail Order Monsters</u>, but the animated screens are at least as good as Saturday morning television. Players can choose from six different monsters (Godzilla, Mr. Meringue, Sphectra, The Glog, Tarantus or Mechatron), six different world-class cities with distinctive landmarks (Tokyo, New York, London, San Francisco, Paris or Moscow), and five different missions (destroy landmark, escape, lunch, search or go berserk). C-64/128. Circle Reader Service Card #12.

SUPER CYCLE: Racing games have always been one of the standard products of the arcade. From Grand Prix, Pole Position and Turbo onward, they've gotten faster and more challenging. SUPER CYCLE is the motorcycle version of the genre. It looks, plays, and sounds like the coin-op version. If you're spending your children's inheritance at the video arcade, you might want to pick this one up. C-64/128. Circle Reader Service Card #13.

Firebird Licencees, Inc.
74 North Central Avenue
Ramsey, New Jersey 07446

STARGLIDER: Air-to-air and air-to-ground combat are simulated in this recent offering from over the Atlantic. The documentation contains a 34 page novella to establish the fiction behind the game, as well as short fictional supplements for each additional level of difficulty. The documentation also contains a polished instruction booklet entitled, <u>Airborne Ground Attack Vehicle Flight Operations Manual</u>. Each attack vehicle is equipped with high energy single-pulse beam lasers and TV guided missiles in order to defeat the invading Ergon air and ground forces. The graphics are effective and begin to make use of the ST's capabilities in this area. Atari ST. Circle Reader Service Card #14.

Mindscape, Inc.
3444 Dundee Road
Northbrook, IL 60062
(312) 480-7667

COMIC WORKS: Imagine a MacPaint(tm) type program with a library of comic art, page layout with capacity for text and graphics to be mixed anywhere on the screen/page, customized panels and voice balloons. You've just imagined CW. This program isn't a game, but if any of our Mac owners are comics buffs, this three disk program is a jewel. It should be useful for creating your own comics (a la <u>Shatter</u>, a professional book created on the Mac and published by 'First Comics') or editing a professional looking fan 'zine. Macintosh. Circle Reader Service Card #15.

HIGH ROLLER: Three dimensional graphics and multiple levels of difficulty highlight this flight simulation. Screens offer a cockpit view from your Harrier and enable you to engage in both air-to-air and air-to-ground combat. Fans of Top Gun and Iron Eagle won't want to miss this opportunity to do their own barrel roll attacks, scissors, and immelmanns. However, since the Harrier has the capability for vertical take-offs and vertical landings, there are even more intricate maneuvers available in this flight simulator. C-64/128. Circle Reader Service Card #16.

INDOOR SPORTS: This game is to bowling, air hockey, ping pong and darts what <u>World Games</u> is to track and field. The game has interesting graphics and can be played by either one or two players. Even if the players are relatively proficient in playing these sports, positioning the on-screen player and using the joystick effectively is challenging. The program keeps track of high scores and victories so that even those who play solitaire can attempt to best their scores in the future. C-64/128. Circle Reader Service Card #17.

SUB MISSION: This game is an adventure/strategy built around a flimsy fiction. It seems that Sigourny Slye and Peter Frey (whoever they are) are missing in action after participating in a series of submarine maneuvers with the obsessive Warlord of another planet. In order to save Sigourny and Peter, the player must engage in sub-to-sub warfare and try to be the first to find and harpoon the "deep mine." After defeating the Warlord, the player must evaluate enough clues to find the escape route. The game comes with a cassette tape which provides the fictional introduction and a tutorial for playing the game. Apple II and IBM PC and PCjr. Circle Reader Service Card #17.

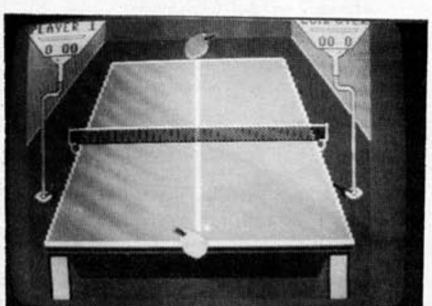
Oowhile Software
5227 Shady Oaks Lane
Friendswood, TX 77546-3019

TRODART: The name of this simulation stands for TROop Deployment and Reconnaissance Terminal. It's a real-time war game played on two separate IBM PC compatible computers over a 300 baud modem. Moves are made simultaneously and so there can be multiple battles and marches during a given period of the game. The object of the game is to capture the enemy base while defending the home base. A secondary objective is to occupy as much territory as possible because new recruits are calculated according to the number of quadrants controlled. The second objective is important because the game has a time limit. In the event time runs out before one side or another captures the enemy base, the side with the largest army wins. IBM. Circle Reader Service Card #18

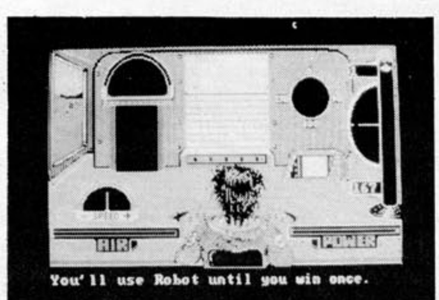
PBI Software
1111 Triton Drive, 2nd Floor
Foster City, CA 94404
(415) 349-8765

STRATEGIC CONQUEST: A wargame of global domination. Your mission is to explore and conquer an unknown world. You control an army, navy and air force against the computer. By using strategy and tactics you capture cities, from which you can produce and deploy even more forces. Your choices of weapons to build include aircraft carriers, bombers, submarines, armies, etc. There is an eco-

Continued on pg. 50



Indoor Sports



Sub Mission



Warship

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ETC.	LIST PRICE	OUR PRICE	App	Atr	C64	IBM
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BRODERBUND WINS LANDMARK DECISION ON COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT!

On October 13, 1986, Broderbund Software, Inc. announced that the United States District Court had ruled in their favor with regard to a suit against Unison World, Inc. over copyright infringement. Unison had marketed a program under the name, "Printmaster," which was visually and functionally similar to Broderbund's popular "Print Shop" software. Both programs can be used to create customized greeting cards, signs, banners, and posters. The court ruled that audio-visual displays or "user interface" of a non-video-game computer program can be copyrighted under the Federal Copyright Act. This indicates that programmers could commit copyright infringement if they copy the look, sequence, and structure of a previously existing program. The decision is expected to have significant future impact on software development. A delighted Douglas Carlston, President of Broderbund, commented that, "This ruling promotes initiative, creativity and incentive to develop new expressions, the very purpose of copyright laws." The victorious executive continued his observations by noting that, "From now on, software pirates will have to think twice before deciding to exploit the creativity of a competitor by simply duplicating the screens of an already successful program."

PRINT SHOP SETS RECORD AND OFFERS UPGRADE

"Print Shop" was the software of choice when students at Thurston Middle School in Laguna Beach, CA printed a banner that stretched 1.7 miles. It took the 420 students, aged 11 to 14, and 12 teachers two weeks to complete the banner. The school used the banner to publicize its relationship with Great American First Savings Bank in providing job forums for career education. The school has received a resolution of approval from the mayor of Laguna Beach and is attempting to qualify for the Guinness Book of World Records.

"Print Shop" is also available in an updated version which allows Apple users to print in color, as well as preview and save designs. The upgraded version is available for Apple II+/IIe/IIc (with at least 64K memory) and may be operated with joystick or KoalaPad. "Print Shop" owners can mail their original "Print Shop" disk and $20.00 to Broderbund Customer Service to receive an updated version. Suggested retail price on the new version is $49.95.

GARDE' ENTERS COMPUTER GAMING FIELD WITH NEW SYSTEM!

Garde' Games of Distinction is proud to enter the computer game market with its first release, Blue Powder & Gray Smoke. Ralph Bosson is the designer of this game with open structure and three different scenarios. The game doesn't depend on game turns, but functions by means of a modified real time command structure. The player can continuously issue orders to his units or simply give orders for the entire game and depend on computer subordinates to follow through on them. The game can be played on a solitaire or multiplayer basis. Bill Harrington edited the rulebooks and Mike LePage (formerly of Sweet Micro Systems) assisted in development.

THE CASE OF THE MISSING HORSE RACE PROGRAM!

Tazumi Software International, developers of Horse Racing Classic (first reviewed in CGW 2.4 and mentioned in the Letters column of CGW 28), reports that copies of the program are still available and may be obtained by writing to Tazumi Software International, Inc.
Second Floor, 6625 Fraser Street
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
V5X 3T6

or calling (604) 324-5115 and asking for Martin Wirick (regular business hours only).

Continued on pg. 12

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INDUSTRY NEWS (con.)

SIMULATIONS CANADA ANNOUNCES SHIFT IN EMPHASIS

Steve Newberg, President of Simulations Canada, states that his company will no longer be designing board games. Noting that more can be done with computer games, the Sim Can executive states that all future publications will be computer games and will emphasize the distinctive design capabilities of a computer rather than making the usual transition from board game to computer-assisted board game. In a recent interview, Newberg announced the following schedule of future releases:

Winter, 1986: Rommel—Battles for Tobruk; Spring, 1987: To the Rhine (Overlord continued); Summer, 1987: Long Lance (WW II tactical naval); Fall 1987: Jutland, Rommel at El Alamein, In Harm's Way (Naval, 1943).

ACCESS SOFTWARE RELEASES TOURNAMENT DISKS!

In September, Access Software released Tournament Disk #1, a supplementary disk to expand their popular Leader Board game. The new disk adds four entirely new 18 hole golf courses on the Atari ST disk (only two new courses on the Commodore 64/128 disk) and a higher degree of difficulty on both disks. Also included on the new disks are provisions for computerized scoring and handicapping. Disks for both systems have a suggested retail price of $19.95.

SOFTWARE COMPANIES MOVE TO NEW QUARTERS!

Krentek Software has relocated in McAllen, TX after a recent move from Kansas City ,KS. Krentek may be reached at: 4601 N. 9th St., McAllen, TX 78504, (512) 687-1284.

Epyx Computer Software has a new location. The company may be reached at: P. O. Box 8020, Redwood City, CA 94063, (415)366-0606

The new street address is 600 Galveston Drive in Redwood City.

COMPUSERVE OFFERS NEW GAMES AND FEATURES!

Compuserve subscribers may now subscribe to Computer Gaming World and other favorite magazines by means of EBSCO Magazine Entree. EBSCO Magazine Entree offers an opportunity to subscribe on-line to magazines that appeal to every interest: sports, art, news, finance, crafts, entertainment, and others. CIS subscribers can access EBSCO by typing GO ME in the Electronic Mall.

An "Air Traffic Controller" game is also available on Compuserve. The simulation requires the player to guide jet aircraft safely through his/her sector of airspace or to an airport within his/her sector. ATC has several levels of difficulty and may be played solitaire or against other players (up to four additional). Scoring is based on successfully guiding jets through the sector. Points depend upon amounts of fuel left, difficulty level, and amount of mistakes. Highest scorers are inducted into a "Hall of Fame."

Another recent game on CIS is Island of Kesmai. Kesmai was a small, fictitious island located at the western tip of the Archipelago of Mu where a group of persecuted magicians were banished. The mages attempted to experiment with black arts and create peculiar creatures in order to wreak revenge on Mu. The mages were hoist by their own petard when the dragon they summoned went berserk and killed them. Are you able to succeed where they failed? Play this multi-player fantasy and find out.

Subscribers to CIS are invited to join one of the many multi-player games of galactic conflict (MegaWars III), trivia quizzes (You Guessed It!), casino games (Multi-Player Blackjack), or play by electronic mail games. To subscribe to Compuserve, call 1-800-848-8990.

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD HAS MOVED: Our NEW Editorial Address is: 515 S. Harbor Blvd. Suite C, Anaheim, CA 92805. Note we are moving from Suite A to Suite C. The mailing address remains: PO Box 4566, Anaheim, CA 92803

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LEATHER GODDESSES of PHOBOS



by Scorpia

Brrrr! It's cold outside. Snow, sleet, icy winds: all that good stuff that comes around this time of year, freezing your fingers and chilling your bones. I love it. You, however, are looking a bit blue around the lips. Don't panic! I have just the thing to warm you up... what could be hotter on a cold winter's night than a little sex? (grin).

Actually, LGOP is pretty tame, even in lewd mode. Oh, there's a little making out here and there, but this is basically a fun game, a spoof of all the derring-do sci-fi adventure stories of the '30's, with a little touch of spice. And if you are in any way disturbed by the sexual motif, you can always play it at the 'tame' level, which will turn LGOP into a pretty straight-forward adventure.

So it's 1936, and you're sitting in Joe's Bar, a grubby dive located somewhere in Upper Sandusky, Ohio. At least the beer is a nickel a mug. With prices like that, you can tell this isn't premium stuff. Your bladder is telling you something, too, and you'd better answer that call of nature soon. After all, the game has to know if you're male or female.

It isn't long afterwards that green tentacles come out of the air and hustle you off to a cozy cell on Phobos. You've been kidnapped by the dreaded Leather Goddesses, to be a subject in their never-ending experiments to find a way of subjugating Earth and turning it into their personal pleasure grounds. Why, that is A FATE WORSE THAN DEATH!!! <shudder>

Well, we (or at least you) can't let that happen! On the other hand, as you stand there in your tight-but-comfy brass bikini (for the ladies) or brass loincloth (for the gentlemen), the prospects are not heartening. But hey, this is the 1930's, and the good guys (and gals) always win!

Renewed by that thought, you leave your cell (psst, it's not locked), and soon find a trusty companion: Tiffany (if you're female) or Trent (if you're male). There is really no difference between them in the game; they both do and say pretty much the same thing. So I'll just refer to them as T from now on.

T will eventually hand you a matchbook, saying that if you can find the objects listed, they can be assembled into a Super-Duper Anti-LGOP Attack Machine. Wow! Just the thing! So you and T begin your zany journey, collecting some pretty bizarre items (a household blender, a rubber hose, a mouse, and a 1933 Ford headlight, among others), and having some pretty bizarre experiences, too.

Stepping through mysterious little black holes that seem to be everywhere, you flit among Mars, Venus, and Cleveland (Cleveland?) in your search for the parts to the machine. The interesting thing is that, generally, you can do the game in almost any order, since the black holes take you back and forth between locations. You can run around Mars for awhile, and then visit Venus, or go to Venus first: the game is fairly non-linear.

However, since you do have to make two trips

to Venus, why don't we start from there? (Actually, if you know what you're doing and plan in advance, you can do all of Venus in one visit) The first thing you notice on arrival is the stalking Venus Fly-Trap.

Much larger than the common Terran variety, also much hungrier, and it moves... in YOUR direction. Ooops. What's a person to do? Well, there are two ways of dealing with the Flytrap. The easy way is to figure out the hidden message on the scrap of paper found in T's cell. You can get past the ambulatory vegetation right away with that. Otherwise, you'll have to come back later with a couple of things from Cleveland to help you out (I liked this way better, myself).

During your wanderings around and through the jungle, you'll come to the house of the Mad Scientist. But check out the back door first, where all the door-to-door salesmen are hanging out. One smart trade here will get you something very important. Then you can knock on the door and take part in yet another weird experiment. I mean, haven't you always wanted to be a gorilla?

No? Then you'd better do something about that. What you need is a little extra oomph, a quick pick-me-up. That's better (don't forget the hose!). Once you're free again, it's off to delightful, wonderful, rubble-strewn, sandy, Mars! Home of ruined castles, harems, catacombs, ugly frogs, and terrible dock jokes.

But don't be in a hurry to go barging off in the Royal Barge just yet; look around a bit first. For instance, there's that cute little marsmouse running around (where else) Hickory and Dickory Dock. And the frog: the ugliest, noisiest, smelliest, most repulsive thing you've ever seen. Kissing the frog is like getting a babel fish: hard work, but worth it (kinda) in the end. However, it will be awhile before you're ready for that.

And let us not overlook King Mitre, whose touch turns everything into 45-degree angles (including, alas, his daughter). Hint: don't shake hands with him. If you got past the Fly Trap earlier, you can help him right now, otherwise, wait until you're back from Cleveland (and Venus).

Speaking of Cleveland, it seems to be a pretty small place in 1936. At least the part you visit. A lawn of sorts, a teensy-weensy house, and a garden are about all you'll see. Oh, and the car, of course, that you notice when you look out the bedroom window. The 1933 Ford, which is just too far below to jump to. There's a sheet on the bed, but it's a bit too short (leave it to Steve Meretzky to short-sheet a bed!). However, you have everything you need right there in the room. In fact, the sheet is all you need.

Once you have the headlight, you can investigate the garden. Maybe you noticed that there didn't seem to be any of those ubiquitous black holes around? And there's another item here you may want, in case the Fly Trap is still running loose in the Venusian jungles. The object is mentioned, but it's not obvious. Read carefully.

Back on Venus (and with the Fly Trap disposed of) you'll find (if you didn't before) another black hole and a jar. Pay attention to the label on the jar. Then step through the hole, and you'll be in the hold of one of the LGOP attack ships. A grenade comes from nowhere! BOOM! Pieces of T are splattered all over the walls (nope, you can't avoid this, sorry).

After a moment of silence in memory of your brave companion, you remember that there is still the menace of the LGOP to consider, so you get on with the job. In time you make your way to the Main Hatch, and once outside the ship, you find Thorbala (if you're female) or Thorblast (if you're male), the nasty assassin who threw the grenade!

He/she has a prisoner (either male or female, depending on your own sex), who gets tied to the hull of a small space yacht when you appear. Now it's just between you and the assassin... and the bug-eyed monster who suddenly showed up, and is making for the helpless person bound to the yacht. Time is precious!! Will you defeat Thorbala/Thorblast in time to save the prisoner? Just remember this: the good guys (and gals!) always win... and they never kill an unarmed opponent.

With the rescue completed (and another machine part in your hot little hand), it's time to return to the ship (and a pleasant surprise) and then find your way back to Mars. You're about to take a delightful cruise down the Martian canals.

One of the charming sights you'll be seeing on this voyage is a dead alien and a secret message (get out your decoder rings!). Actually, if you read



the comic book (a must!), you should have little trouble figuring out what it says. Then it's on your way again, perhaps with a quick look in at the Exit Shop (where the proprietor, alas, doesn't have change for a ten... sounds like a New York cabbie to me), and finally, MY Kinda Dock! where you will visit the forbidden harem of the Sultaness (or Sultan, as the case may be... by the way, did you ever notice that you can reach the barge controls while standing outside? Something to keep in mind).

Well, you get to visit the harem if you know the answer to the riddle. Trust me, folks: the answer is right there in front of you. Honest. Just look at your screen. It is so painfully obvious, you might miss it. Try not to.

Whew! Ok, you don't get eaten by tigers, but instead spend a delightful hour (if you want to) with one of the harem's 8000+ inmates. Which one is a matter of careful choice. Because only that particular husband (or wife) is the one who will show you the secret entrance to the catacombs.

Now the fun begins. Take out the map that came with the game... you'll never get through without it (and also re-read that comic book!). You'll have to slosh your way through the murky waters and dim passages until you've visited all those little square boxes on the map (going up and down at times between the two levels, too). Watch out for those crabs! Not to mention beetles and alligators.

There are two ways out (once you have everything you need): a ladder up to the Laundry Room, and a black hole that transports you back to the Royal Barge. I'd recommend the ladder for now, and the hole afterwards (less sloshing around down there, y'know). Besides, you also need that clothespin.

So, now that you've (ahem) played at the palace, it's time to frolic in the snow at the Icy Dock. Hmm, just like winter here at the South Pole of Mars, and what would a South Pole be without penguins? And there they are, quite a few of them, in fact, plus one who's waving a sign in your face. It's a good idea to read that sign.

Once past the penguins, you come to the robot gypsy camp. Alas, no sooner have they greeted you, then tragedy strikes... a meteoroid flashes down from the skies and vaporizes both of them. Now the poor little baby robot in the tent is an orphan (awwwwww).

Well, you can't just leave the poor little, err, thing all alone. By great good luck, however, there is (guess what?) an orphanage near by (there must be some divine hand behind all this, it couldn't be just mere coincidence). Still, you don't want to simply walk up to the door and knock; you might get a rude greeting. You're going to have to be a bit devious here. But remember, it's all in a good cause (not to mention, you don't have the facilities

for taking care of the baby yourself, anyway).

Hey, get on move on! Time's a-wasting and you still have a frog to kiss, among other things, so head on to the black hole (they really ARE everywhere!). Back in the warmer climes of Mars again, you're ready for the big moment. You have (or should have) everything you need to kiss the ugly amphibian. So, prepare yourself, get ready, and... smooch.....

(sigh!) The Prince(ess) is obviously the love 'em and leave 'em type, but at least you have something to remember him/her by. And now, checking your inventory, you ought to have all the components for the machine. There is only one thing more to pick up, so float on down the canal to the Exit Shop, for that final black hole.

Where does it lead to, you may ask? To the very private boudoir of the Leather Goddesses themselves, that's where. But don't bother looking, because you're suddenly ejected out into the main plaza. And you're not alone (gulp!).

In fact, the entire attack force of the LGOP is after you! The fleet is swooping down from overhead! Robotic monsters of every description are stomping, chomping, and bulldozing their way right to you!! And the soldiers are setting up a (gasp!) Death Ray!!!

They're all closing in! Will T complete the Anti-LGOP machine in time? Will it work?? Will Earth be saved from the menace of these fiends? Will Sir-Tech ever release Wizardry IV? (Umm, scratch that last one)

Whew! That was quite a jaunt, eh? I sure do hope you managed to save the world from a fate worse than death. In the meantime, if you need help with an adventure game, you can reach me in the following ways:

On Delphi: Visit the GameSIG (from the Groups and Clubs menu) On GEnie: Stop in at the Games Roundtable (type Scorpia to reach the RT) On the Source: Send SMail to ST1030. By U.S. Mail (enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you live in the United States): Scorpia, PO Box 338, Gracie Station, New York, NY 10028.

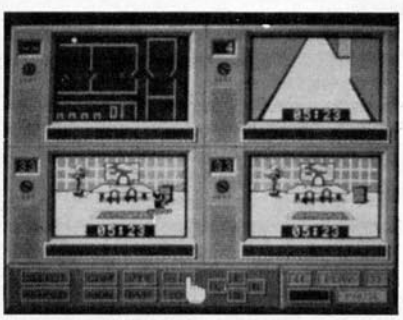
Until next time, happy adventuring! ■

by Gregg Williams

Hacker II

You may remember Hacker, a game from Activision that promised you the illicit thrill of being a computer system-cracker (sorry, I come from the old school, where "hacker" is a term of honor). It didn't deliver on that claim, really—the game was mostly about spying, not computer cracking—but it was a fairly interesting game. Steve Cartwright, the author of Hacker, has designed a sequel, called Hacker II: the Doomsday Papers." It's still more about spying than about system cracking, but the initial phase of the game is clever in the way it gives you the feeling of computer cracking. The game's design and implementation are stunning—whether or not you'll enjoy it, though, depends on how much patience and resistance to frustration you have.

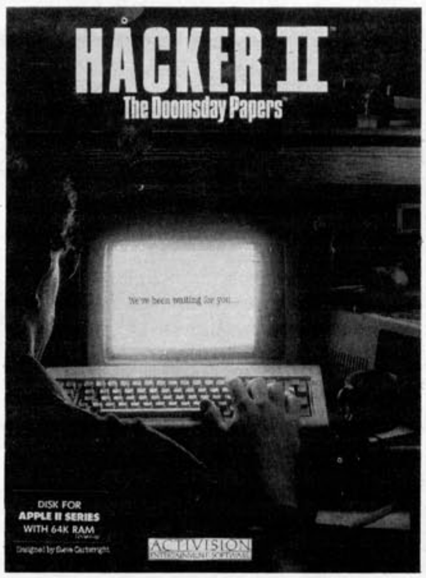
It begins innocently: you see a blank screen and hear the Touch-Tones of a number being dialed, then a few rings, an answer, and the scrabbling sound of computers talking to each other over a modem. You type in a logon name and find that you are in a telecommunications service called "Actisource." Before the main menu finishes, though, the transmission is interrupted, and you see a message from the CIA, who has contacted you because you are "the world's greatest hacker." They ask you to accept a mission of the utmost importance: to steal the plans for a Russian project called the Doomsday Papers,



thereby thwarting a Russian attempt at world domination.

But, of course, there's more to it than that. The papers are in a guarded vault in a Russian military installation, with the pieces of the vault's combination in four locked filing cabinets, only one of which you have the key for. The CIA has smuggled three small robots, called Mobile Remote Units (MRUs), which you can control using your computer and a piece of software called an MFSM (Multi-Function Switching Matrix) Emulator.

Here's where the flavor of system cracking comes through the strongest (and far more faithfully than in Hacker). The game comes with no instructions, just what you get on-screen and a manual called the Multi-Function Switching Matrix Operator's Manual, Volume I, which is the exact image of your average, indecipherable electronic equipment manual. This manual is beautiful because it's so true to real life—you end up wading through 20 pages of diagrams and unenlightening technical prose because you're pretty certain that something in the manual explains the cryptic buttons on the MFSM: "SELCT," "BYP," TGS," and others.



The MFSM (the hardware device that fills your screen) is stunningly realistic on the Atari ST. You see four video monitors and a panel of buttons. The monitors are currently filled with static, and when you get an image on one of the screens, it "rolls" like a TV image out of adjustment. As it turns out, you can fill the screen with a variety of images, each of which tells you something important about the building you're in. (I'm being vague here to keep from spoiling the learning curve this game puts you through.)

Prepare to lose this game dozens if not hundreds of times before you win it. Several things are against you. First, you have no layout of the installation. Second, the corridors and rooms in the installation contain 40 closed-circuit TV cameras, which are periodically activated in a set sequence. Third, a guard roams the corridors. Fourth, you cannot pause or save the game. Finally (and most importantly), if either the guard or an activated camera sees you, a security machine called an Eliminator kills your MRU within ten seconds—no exceptions.

Think of this game as an assault on Mount Everest—you're going to have to really want it, and you're going to have to put in a lot of real work to make it happen. The game progresses in stages. First, you must learn how to use the MFSM (the manual holds valuable clues and facts). Second, you must, through the process of killing (literally) hundreds of MRUs, map the installation. Third, you must get to the filing cabinets and get the combination from them. Fourth, you must (somehow) get to the vault, open it, get the papers, and deliver them to a U.S. agent waiting at the front door of the building. I'm currently in step three, with no hope of getting through it—this game requires split-second timing, the ability to think "under the gun" and keep track of several things simultaneously, and the cleverness to solve several fiendish puzzles designed into the game. I have none of these abilities to any great degree, and I recommend getting another person to help you.

As I said before, Hacker II is breathtaking in both design and implementation, but it is not a casual game. Still, if you have the perseverance to finish this game, I bet it'll give you a lot of gaming per dollar spent.

In Brief

Everyone has different ideas of what makes a good game. Activision placed a game called Shanghai next to Hacker II as one of its two top games of the season, but when I saw it, I couldn't believe they had wasted their resources on putting it out. Shanghai is no more than a form of Solitaire in which you're given a randomized configuration of cards and you repeatedly remove identical pairs of cards (revealing cards underneath) trying to clear the board—that's it: take two cards, discard, take two cards, discard.....! If this is the industry's idea of what the public wants, we're in real trouble. The perceptive reader will infer that I do not think this is a game worth buying. [Ed. Note: For other opinions on Shanghai see "Year in Review" and "Macintosh Window" in this issue.]

In the August, 1986 issue of CGW (issue #30), I very favorably reviewed MicroProse's Silent Service, an impressively realistic game of World War II submarine combat. MicroProse has now translated Silent Service to the Atari 520 ST, and it's even better—the graphics and sound effects are sharper, the game moves between different functions faster, and the disk contains a new mission scenario.

That's all for now. Until next month, remember: one man's program bug is another man's product feature.

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Year in Review

by Charles Ardai

Computer gaming has changed a great deal since that first day Pac-Man was featured on the six o' clock news. So, for that matter, have computer gamers. The slick, dark-eyed marathon Defender player of old has gone the way of the slick, dark-eyed kid who could solve Rubik's Cube in under thirty seconds. Today's games are complex, intricate and creative. Today's computers have capabilities that would have sent gamers from the Atari VCS era into shock. But to what end, progress?

Like the mythic snake that swallowed its own tail, we have pirated ourselves into near-death, hurting most those companies whose products we deem best. Four short years ago, we were on top of the world; two years ago, our world collapsed. Those companies that survived the shakeout kept producing games, but interest in the field diminished just as quickly as technology shot ahead. One by one, computer magazines folded, companies bankrupted, and stores closed.

A comparison to Rocky III comes to mind (God help me): Sylvester Stallone being beaten to within an inch of his life because of his short-sightedness, and losing everything that he had fought so hard to achieve. The film had a happy ending, though. Rocky came back to reach new heights (still newer ones remain to be seen, no doubt, as the number of sequels increases, but that's another story). Can the comparison be maintained?

———

An open door looms before you: Above a round handle is a sign which reads, "Software Village." At the top of the stairs, you can just make out what seems to be a computer store.

`>GO TO THE STORE`

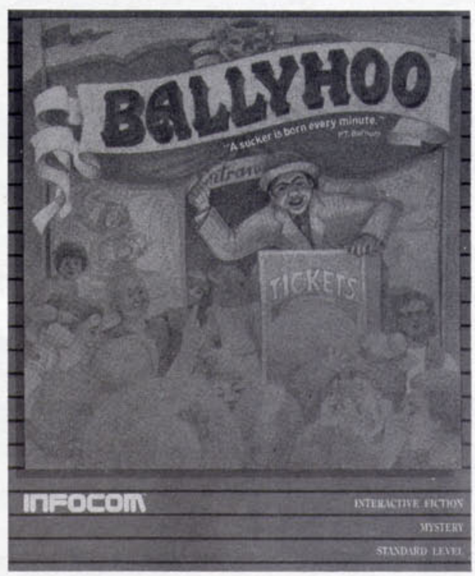
Cautiously, you enter the brightly-lit store. A counter at one end stands unmanned. Sounds emerge from an alcove in the back where a bored salesman toys with a flight simulator. The walls of the store are sparsely covered with colorful game boxes. All the titles are familiar, the same ones you have been seeing for months.

`>ASK BORED SALESMAN "WHAT'S NEW?"`

Not much," the salesman replies with a mournful yawn. "I got a new Print Shop file in the other day, but that's about it.

———

"As the year comes to a close, it is tempting to look back on the past twelve months nostalgically. This has not always been possible in recent years. 1985, for instance, was so bleak as to make an article like this senseless. The past year, however, hasn't been half bad. Not only were there many



technical advances, but you could almost feel the old energy returning. Perhaps the strangest manifestation of this revival spirit came when Atari decided that the time was ripe to re-release the VCS and to release, for the first time, the years-old 7800 Video Game System. Why would anyone buy these obsolete relics? After all, the graphics are bad, the gameplay is mindless and in any case, anyone who would want a videogame probably already has one somewhere in the back of his closet. For goodness sakes, the other day I saw a VCS selling for fifteen dollars at a yard sale.

But the energy... that's what counts. And the

energy is back. Either that or Atari decided to empty its warehouses.

Some people may find it hard to accept this idea (no, not the idea about the warehouses...). "How can you say the energy is back," they would ask, "when games are released at the rate of two or three every month?"

There were, it is true, fewer new products released in 1986 than during computer gaming's heyday. But while the flow of new games is less than in past years, those games that were released in 1986 were better than ninety percent of the software released in previous years.

Certain fields disappeared, or very nearly did. Pure arcade games are now almost impossible to find. At the same time, certain other fields were blessed with many successes and improvements. 1986 saw the renaissance of the strategy-adventure game, for instance. What dedicated gamer will soon forget the opening to the long-awaited Ultima IV? Who could ignore the peerless interactive sophistication of Infocom's new games, especially Ballyhoo?

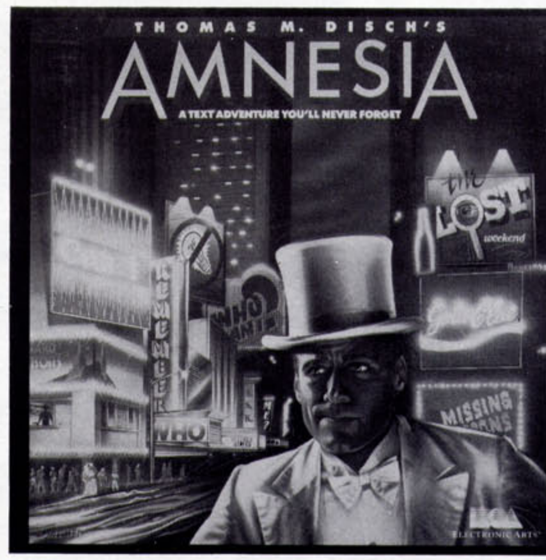
Does it really matter that only three companies—Activision, Epyx and Infocom—now make up the majority of the software market or even that it's really been two companies since Activision bought Infocom? Not so long as those three (two) keep writing games that are as good as the ones they gave us this year.

Epyx's games are a bit of an oddity: successful, entertaining arcade-style contests in an adventure game age. Why would the same people who play SSI's gritty war simulations enjoy the "Push-Pull" action of, say, World Games? Who knows? Nevertheless, they do. Aaron Lloyd of *Crazy Eddie's* computer sales force says, "World Games was one of our top sellers. That and all adventure games."

I have to admit having a weakness for Epyx's games myself. After a few hours of delving through the stygian depths of Spellbreaker, I enjoy a brief foray into the world of Championship Wrestling or Supercycle. In all fairness, these are **not** simple arcade games. Epyx not only released the excellent naval simulation, Destroyer, but distributes other games which require strategy, thought and precision timing.

It's good to know that there is still a source for good games in which the emphasis is on graphics and action. It's even better to know that there is still a market for such games. Epyx's success indicates that both of these statements are true. Further, the past year has seen a comfortable, steady release of uniformly fine material. Who could ask for more?

Activision is another enigma. Their games are all graphically superb, but they have a tremendous range of overall quality. The vacuous Countdown to Shutdown was no less beautiful than the infinitely superior Fast Tracks. Yet, the former is unplayable while the latter is everything but. The imported Rocky Horror Show has evocative scenery, but no play value. Shanghai is probably the best game of the year [Ed. Note: For other opinions on Shanghai see "Macintosh Window" and "Atari Playfield" in this issue.], but The Eidolon is one of the worst.



Yet, they all come from the same company. Unbelievable!

One can always count on an Activision program being attractive, polished and pleasant. It may not always be interesting to play. In the past year, slightly more than half of Activision's software was genuinely excellent. That's a good enough track record for anyone, but to waste fractal graphics and the talents of Lucasfilm Games on The Eidolon?!

As far as track records go, no one can beat Infocom. Infocom released four games this year (not counting the Enchanter Gift Pack) and all have been excellent. Quantum leaps in adventure game technology allowed Infocom to deliver consistently good software along with witty, engrossing stories. Even this company's packaging has improved and considering the goodies they put in with such classics as Infidel and Planetfall, that's saying a mouthful.

Continued on pg. 24

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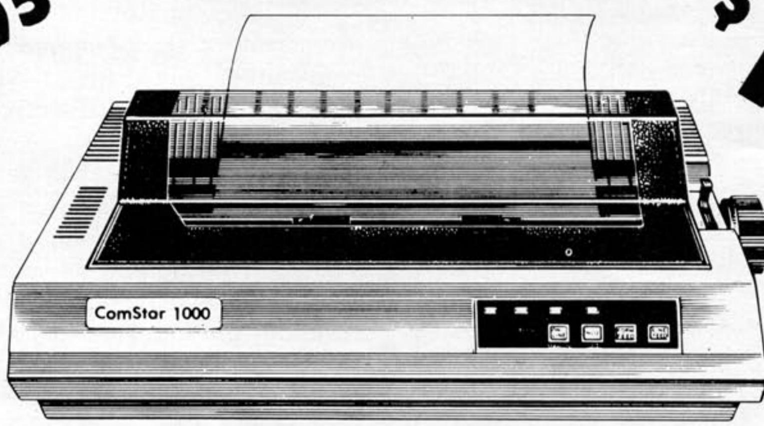
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Year in Review

Continued from pg. 21



Infocom's 1986 releases were Ballyhoo, Trinity, Moonmist, and Leather Goddesses of Phobos. Each is better than the other three combined and if you think that's a paradox, you haven't spent enough time feeding tea to the door in The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. Infocom has refined interactive fiction to a fine art, devising sequences that simulate artificial intelligence to an extent undreamt of even in Hitchhiker's. Of the four, Ballyhoo is a personal favorite, but all are recommended. 1986 has, indeed, been a vintage year for those Great Underground Emperors from Cambridge.

The salesman looks up from his computer and eyes you warily. "The year in review?" he asks. "You know, Ardai, people will be mighty sore if you don't mention Electronic Arts."

`>MENTION ELECTRONIC ARTS`

The salesman shakes his head sadly. "Not to me!" he lectures angrily, "To them!" He jabs a cruel thumb at the readers to punctuate his statement.

`>SAY "I'LL DO MY BEST"`

No "Year in Review" would be complete without a mention of the phenomenal work done by the many other companies striving to rebuild the computer gaming world. Electronic Arts has done some of the finest work ever seen on any computer and has been instrumental in getting the Amiga past a very shaky start. This year saw many new games from EA, including one of its most popular ever, The Bard's Tale and its sequel (The Bard's Tale II). One new EA offering stands out among the 1986 roster: Amnesia. This text adventure is a brilliant, witty and intriguing story set in an amazingly detailed rendition of New York City. As a writer, I find myself tempted to give all the credit for its success to Thomas M. Disch, but it would be foolish to ignore EA's crucial involvement. Without EA and their computer technology, Amnesia would be a book. Think about it.

EA kept tossing surprises our way with many different sorts of games, though this really shouldn't be surprising since EA gets the games it markets from many varied sources. Even in their own software, however, new dimensions have emerged.

Starflight finally came out and turned out to be the best space exploration game in years. Kyle Freeman's Dark Lord seems to be a bit of a throwback to the Wizard and the Princess school of adventure gaming, but Freeman has done it as well as it ever has been done. Further, everything EA has produced for the Amiga is exceptional.

Clearly, 1986 has been a good year for computer games. New innovations kept surfacing throughout the year and changing the way we look at our software. For instance, this was the year we introduced the third dimension to computer chess. Since



the three-quarter perspective first made its way onto store shelves, everyone has been jumping on the bandwagon. Be honest, though, wasn't it exciting the first time you saw it?

Other trends also became clear as the year progressed. One was *Macintoshization*, doing everything possible to make other computers resemble the Mac. This involved windows (The Kobayashi Alternative) and pull-down menus (Borrowed Time--the most fast-paced cinematic graphic adventure available), as well as icon-driven systems and mice for all computer systems. Strangely, while this was happening, the Mac's own popularity went into a tailspin.

But with all these innovations, one mustn't allow the tried-and-true to get lost in the shuffle. It's easy to see the glitter and forget about the substance. New styles and new games may have gotten the headlines in 1986, but most of the time we were playing old favorites.

War games, for instance, have been around for almost as long as the home computer has. They are still around, of course, and they captured a great part of our attention over the course of the year. Companies like Avalon Hill, SSI, Microprose, SSG, and Datasoft all created unique scenarios. Settings may have changed (Road Warrior-type settings were especially popular, as were fantasy environments), but basically, the field has remained the same as ever.

So, what has really changed over the past twelve months? War games are the same, except for the scenarios and a few improvements to combat systems. Epyx's biggest hit was yet another "Games" game. Infocom has a new batch of text adventures, including a science fiction comedy by Steve Meretzky and a game for novices by Stu Galley and Jim Lawrence (shades of Planetfall and Seastalker). Electronic Arts is rehashing Wizardry (though Bard's Tale is admittedly an admirable twist on the theme). Television commercials featuring a video game cartridge that looks like Dig Dug have been appearing with alarming regularity. Rubik has unveiled a new toy. Stallone is working on Rambo III.

Is it true that there is nothing new under the sun? Maybe, but it might also mean that before any company is willing to take the chance of releasing something really new on an unprepared public, the world of computer gaming will have to be more firmly entrenched than it is now. A lot of people lost a lot of money the last time the market "crashed." It only makes sense for them to test the waters before the possibility of making the same mistake twice becomes reality. Of course, you and I know that the computer gaming world will never die, don't we? Still, we can't blame the developers for being careful.

What's coming? Next year will be even better

than this one was. Games are already being prepared which will knock your socks off. I've seen some pre-release material and it all looks great.

"And after that?" you ask, "what happens a few years ahead?" Think holograms, voice-recognition, movie-quality animation, and laser disk adventure games. All of these are in the cards since several companies have them in various stages of development. Atari, for instance, developed a rudimentary holographic system years ago. Think what could be done today!

In retrospect, 1986 was a fine year, but 1987 *can* be better. Show your support by buying lots of games (and check with us each issue to see which games are worth buying!). Oh, one other thing, pick up a copy of Mastertronic's Zzzz. This won't make 1987 any better, but Zzzz is gobs of fun and may be the sleeper hit of the year.

Through the store's great plate glass window, you can see the last rays of the sun disappearing over the horizon. Dusk lies heavily upon the land, but soon will come the light of a new day. The salesman prepares to leave.

>HIDE BEHIND THE COUNTER

There's no room.

>HIDE BEHIND THE SALESMAN

Playing with the salesman is not notably useful. The salesman holds the door open for you.

>LEAVE STORE

As you leave the store, the salesman locks up behind you. You walk down the stairs together. You are on Lexington Avenue in Manhattan. It is almost dark. A man selling knives on the street corner leers at you as you pass him.

>SALESMAN, WILL THINGS GET BETTER?

He nods. "I think so," he says, "and they're not so bad the way they are now. I've got some new games coming in next week that are supposed to be really great. We'll see."

>SALESMAN, THANK YOU

"You're welcome," he says and vanishes in a puff of smoke. You walk home with a feeling of optimism in your heart. Tomorrow, after all, is another day.


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Gettysburg

The Turning Point

by Ed Curtis

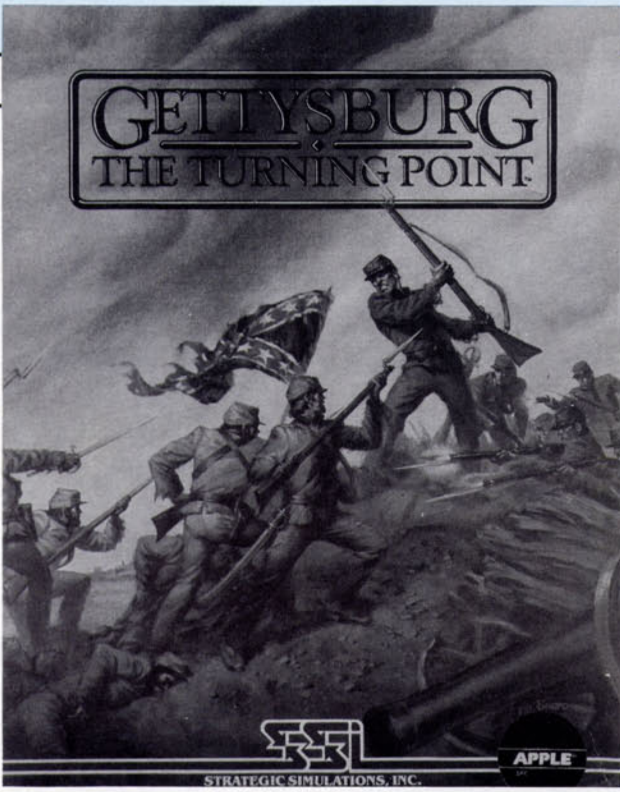
Name:	Gettysburg: The Turning Point
System:	Apple, Atari, C-64
# Players:	1-2
Price:	$59.95
Designers:	David Landrey Chuck Kroegel
Publisher:	Strategic Simulations Mountain View, CA

The year 1986 has seen the release of many interesting new computer games. It has also seen renewed interest in the subject of the American Civil War, with the release of several new titles and the promise of major projects yet to be released (such as Strategic Studies Group's upcoming *The Road to Appomatox* and Gardé's *Blue Powder & Grey Smoke*). As should be expected, SSI was one of the first to offer a new Civil War game with the release of *Antietam*. Possessing a new gaming system which was essentially a compromise between "board game" like movement/combat and "miniatures" like movement/combat, *Antietam* proved to be a very successful design which provided a good balance between realism (accuracy of historical simulation) and playability. SSI's new system captured much of the flavor of brigade level combat during the Civil War. Not content with success, SSI has followed the popular *Antietam* with *Gettysburg: The Turning Point* (GTP) and incorporated into it a series of rule refinements which much improve the already superior game rules to be found in its predecessor.

Historically, Gettysburg remains one of the most difficult of all battles to successfully simulate in an interesting game format. The difficulty, however, does not lie in an area which many would suspect, but in the fact that this climactic three day battle is just too well known. Combined with this widespread knowledge is another fact that can potentially ruin the battle of Gettysburg as a worthwhile subject of gaming interests. This is the fact that the battle was a massive meeting engagement and that the battle happened as it did because neither side was certain until the battle was well underway as to just where their opponents main forces were to be found and just when those %#$&&%$ reinforcements would arrive. This factor was especially critical for the Confederates under the usually decisive Gen. Lee.

Plagued by uncertainties and aware that a major defeat in his exposed position could mean exposing the entire eastern portion of the Confederacy to the Union forces, Lee committed his forces against the Union forces available on the first day in a manner uncharacteristically cautious and thus lost his greatest opportunity to destroy the advancing elements of the Army of the Potomac in detail. Not, however, so handicapped by lack of knowledge, the recreator not only knows how badly the initial Union forces are overpowered both quantitatively and qualitatively, but also the widely separated sources of the piecemeal Union reinforcements and their times of arrival.

Fighting the battle under these circumstances





with historic setups and calling it the "Battle of Gettysburg" is at best a farce. Even starting on the second day leaves one with something to be desired if one is actually trying to refight the battle, as the exposed Union left flank is very well known to any but the least knowledgeable of budding Union commanders. Thus, the most important events of the second day will be negated by swift and massive reinforcements of the exposed flank. This leaves one with the option of a historically accurate recreation of the third day of battle; a day before which most of the most important questions about the battle had already been answered. By that time, neither side was to suffer an overwhelming defeat or to gain an overwhelming victory unless handed such by the other side. In short, given foreknowledge of the actual happenings of the battle, it is impossible to recreate the battle we know as the Battle of Gettysburg within a game format without the active collaboration of both sides.

Well, having thus apparently eliminated much of the value of the game which is the subject of my review, why continue? The reason to continue is that SSI has, by a simple device, not only removed my objections, but has produced a very superior game *and* simulation of one of the most critical confrontations between the armies of the North and South. In the initial setup phase, one of the options presented allows the random variance of each divisions arrival by plus or minus four turns. The uncertainty of what forces you face, from where they are coming, and the lack of knowledge about just when your expected reinforcements will arrive very successfully captures the strategic and grand-tactical feelings in a game who's gaming system already does one of the best jobs at capturing the feeling of tactical brigade level combat currently available.

What you, the gamer, therefore gets is an endless number of different "Battles of Gettysburg,"with none of them an exact historical recreation of the one which took place, but with each an accurate simulation of what could have taken place given an over anxious commander here or a broken axle there—all within the framework of a smoothly flowing thoroughly enjoyable game.

On the negative side of GTP's rules and execution are several minor complaints, without which no review is complete. One of these is the fact that during movement, any unit over which another unit has moved disappears until accessed by cycling through your units. Unless you pay particular attention to the location of such invisible units, it can prove quite a bother.

Potentially the greatest of the problems lies in the artificial intelligence. While it fights reasonably well (too well, sometimes!), it tends to overreact to the threat represented by isolated cavalry brigades in its rear areas by throwing disproportionate quantities of units at them. At the same time, however, it is prone to exposing lone artillery units to destruction by these same roaming cavalry units (I was able to destroy 75 Confederate guns on the first day with nothing but my two cavalry brigades). The computer also seems rather indifferent to Union held victory hexes. Wide ranging

Continued on pg. 32

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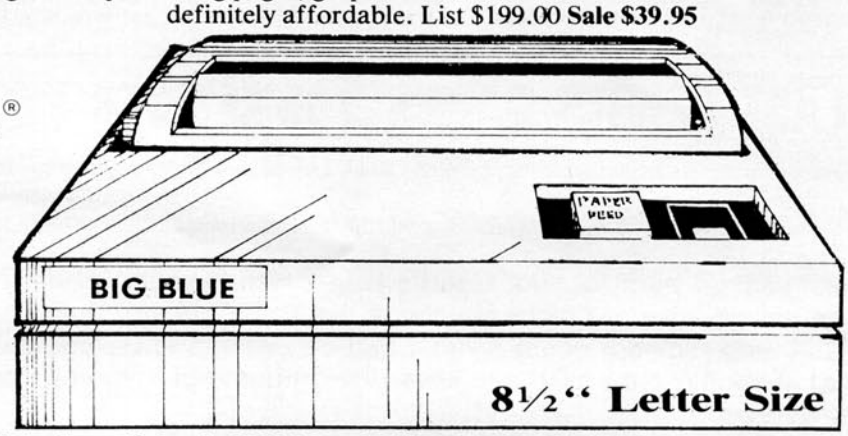
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Gettysburg

Continued from pg. 29

cavalry units captured all of the northern edge victory squares on the first day but southern reinforcements just moved through said hexes with seeming indifference.

GTP has too many good features for them all to be singled out within any review of less than double the normal length. We could start with the high quality of the helpful map sheet, or with the very easy flow of play which allows someone with little experience of the games method of play to master it within a very short period and to understand just why the things that are happening, are happening (no small feat). The graphics used in the game could also be praised for ways in which they clearly display the information needed for decision making such as terrain, unit composition, and much more. Just let it be said that if I had found ten times as much wrong with the program as I did, it would still be in the positive column when weighed against its merits.

A few tips to players not emphasized in the rule book might include such things as the injunction to always keep your divisions together. They should be committed and withdrawn as one. Also, while the Union commander can give himself a bit of relief by drawing off Confederate forces with his cavalry units, be careful as the Confederates will put such force into this that you are open to being surrounded if not very careful. A final thought would be that a fatigued unit which should not fight can lend its ZOC to further destroy a units destined to retreat or rout as each ZOC moved through while routing causes staggering casualties and large quantities of men to be captured. A final suggestion would be for Confederate commanders to be very aware of the position of his superior commanders, as their presence or lack thereof can prove the difference in a given battle and represents a definite advantage of his side which should be exploited fully.

There is little question in my mind that GTP is one of the most enjoyable "conflict simulations" (read--war games) that it has been my pleasure to play in a very long time. After years of interest in the factors leading up to, and the conduct of the American Civil War, it is a very welcome addition to the growing number of games on this subject and possibly the best currently available. ■

Strategically Speaking covers strategy game tips, including tips on wargames, sports games, economic and other simulations, as well as classic style games.

DISCLAIMER: The tips printed in SS are those of the authors. We try to avoid printing tips that don't work, but we cannot playtest all, or even most of them. So, let the player beware.

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Try to keep under 250 words if possible.

GETTYSBURG - THE TURNING POINT LEVEL 1 CAMPAIGN (Strategic Simulations)

The best way to defeat General Lee is to allow the maximum variable in reinforcement arrivals, hidden units, and the least amount of ammo. This creates the true uncertainties that abounded at Gettysburg.

The first day will make or break the Union player. Place the cavalry demi-brigades in column immediately and send them around the board to occupy objective hexes. Most will be retaken by the computer, but occasionally some will be overlooked and 1,000 points could make a difference. Leave the cavalry artillery outside of rebel artillery range to keep an eye on Heth's division. In spite of cavalry action, Heth will not advance until Pender comes up.

Your I Corps should not try to occupy MacPherson's Ridge due to time/space limitations. They should build a strong line along Seminary Ridge curving towards Penn College. When the fragile XI Corps arrives, they should defend the Benner's Hill sector. The cavalry brigades should retire to the hills with Gamble on Culp's and Devin on Cemetery. The artillery should also be sent to these positions as their retention is the key to victory. When the XI Corps routs, they will retreat to Wolf's Hill which they should be able to hold the second and third days. The I Corps will execute a fighting withdrawal to the hills. The main rebel effort often comes against Culp's Hill and the issue will often be in doubt, but retention is vital.

During the second and third days, the computer does not try the flanking maneuver that led to the battles of the Round Tops. Instead, it concentrates artillery and infantry on the hills and attempts to bludgeon through. Casualties will be high but failure is likely. If losses among the artillery units become too high, try Wellington's tactic of reverse slope deployment behind the crest. Confederate units reaching the top of the hills will be surprised by Napoleons at range one. With the exception of tactical counterattacks, no Union effort should be made in this area. If you desire to be offensive, send the XII Corps on a limited attack to recapture the rebel objective hex on the Hanover Road.

The third day will see more of the same rebel tactics. If the opening arises, try sending Buford around Lee's west flank behind Herr Ridge to pick up some points by ambushing stragglers and artillery units. Like the historical strategy, the computer wants to bash you head on and won't stay on the defensive for long. His charges against the hills will cause some anxious moments, but caution will be rewarded.

Charles Jehlen
Port Arthur, TX

SILENT SERVICE (Microprose)

When your submarine is at a shallow depth and destroyers are attacking, set your speed at four and use full left or right rudder to turn inside of the destroyer. Keep doing this while diving until you rest on the bottom or dive below temporary boundary. Once under the boundary, set speed at one or two and head for the convoy. This should be enough to throw the destroyers off. If you are resting on the bottom and are depth-charged, it's a good idea to jettison debris. When damaged and unable to recover from a dive, blow your emergency ballast to give yourself more of a chance to fight it out on the surface. Try to run away from the destroyer. He will pursue you and give you a zero degree deflection shot. Set the gun at -75 yards on the first shot. Usually 2-3 hits will take care of the destroyer. The destroyer usually waits until it is within 2,500 yards before opening fire. At night, if the convoy has only one escort, try closing to 1,000 yards and picking him off with your gun. If you succeed, you'll have the entire convoy at your mercy.

Steve Hagarty
Los Angeles, CA

In the 'Wahoo vs. Convoy' convoy actions scenario, there is much opportunity for obtaining a great score and ranking. First, take all reality factors except for Angle on the Bow, unless you are an expert. Set the difficulty factor as high as you want, since it seems to make little difference in convoy actions. As soon as you are underway, submerge and steam NW at full power. Don't worry about the ships at this point. Check the navigation map for the general location of the destroyer that is coming in and set your course to intercept (generally NW). As soon as he comes into view on the attack plot map, cut all engines and monitor his progress through the periscope. He isn't expecting you to be there, so he isn't being very cautious. As soon as he comes into range, fire a torpedo salvo. One hit is all you need, but missing could prove hazardous to your health. As soon as the destroyer is gone, you can chase the other ships down and shoot them at your leisure. This is good for 21,000 tons and displacement of one or two of the 'real' subs.

Dan Stephens
Minneiska, MN

STAR FLEET I (Interstel Corporation)

To get extremely high ratings, try the following. When you go to rescue a starbase, try to disable, rather than destroy the enemy vessels (often the starbase will help you in this). Then, when all are disabled, tow each in turn to the starbase, but do not dock. Don't forget to transport your marines and capture prisoners, also. Deliver any Zaldron vessel last. If you are low in energy, dock with the last vessel. With this procedure, you get credit for saving the starbase, delivering vessels, delivering prisoners, and extra credit for any Zaldrons (which will more than make up for any extra time spent, although you must be careful on short missions). I routinely get over 120% this way. Be careful, however, of scores over 150%. The program was messed up on the Atari version and you may have to adjust the maintenance section as a result.

Robert Destro
Cinnaminson, NJ

COMPUTER QUARTERBACK (Strategic Simulations, Inc.)

Optimize your team by finding that incremental $1000 that increases individual player class performance level by one percent. Since player contracts usually include bonus clauses of various minuscule amounts, seemingly trivial rewards will get that additional performance on the gridiron, over and above the contract amount. Any funds paid over that incremental amount are wasted.

Wasted funds saved may be paid to the sensitive skill positions such as the ends, backs or the kickers. Funds saved from the more expensive classes, the lines and defensive backs, can go to improve the performance of the skill positions. It can be surprising how much of a pay cut some players will stand before their performance percentage degrades, as well.

Don't neglect your special team. It is part of your defensive game and provides a good deal of bang for the buck, being comparable in cost to the offensive back positions.

Patrick Richard Treacy
Tallahassee, FL

U.S.A.A.F.
(Strategic Simulations, Inc.)

When playing the American player in U.S.A.A.F., you can launch airfield strikes against coastal airfields close to England and have them go undetected until ten minutes before the strike 95% of the time by setting their altitude at 1,000 feet. Sometimes, these raids will not be sighted until they are on top of the target itself. Fighters, because of superior speed, can often execute a raid on a field which is two squares into enemy territory before the Germans can react to the threat. When playing against a human opponent, these techniques are usually even more effective since they won't have the computer's quick reflexes and will be inclined to react when they shouldn't and fail to react when they should.

Targets in North-East Europe will be largely unopposed when the American player launches raids with cloud cover in North-Central Europe greater than or equal to about 65%. There is seldom a need to cover these raids on the way out because the Germans won't have enough time to react and catch them before they duck into the clouds. Be sure, however, that the raid is provided with some cover on the return flight or the Germans will give them a bath when they peek out of the clouds. The same technique can be used against Munich, Linz, and Vienna with a suitable offset point. These techniques are particularly effective against aircraft factories in the early portion of the game when the Germans have much less production to spare.

Craig E. Deaton
Yuma, AZ

BREAKTHROUGH IN THE ARDENNES
(Strategic Simulations, Inc.)

In order to win, you must move quickly in order to get your forces across the Our River at the earliest possible moment. In order to accomplish this, attack the established bridgeheads at hexes 13,23 and 16,24. Begin by attacking the American 112/28 INF regiment in hex 13,24 with the 560 VG division, 156/116 PZGR regiment. Set the 156th and 60th PZGR regiments to advance after the attack. In the combat phase, the American unit will retreat back across the river with the Panzergrenadiers following. In the second combat phase, set the 16/116 PZGR regiment in travel mode and bring it to the hex with the PZGR's and set it to attack the American unit and advance after combat also. The American unit will retreat again with the Panzer regiment following. This establishes one bridgehead. For the other bridgehead, attack the American 424/106 INF regiment in hex 16,25 with the 164/62 VG regiments in 16,26 which will also force a retreat across the river. In the second phase, move the 183/62 VG regiment into the forest hex above and set it to attack across the bridge and advance after combat. After the American retreat, you have your second bridgehead. With the bridge built at hex 9,23 at the beginning of the second turn, you are now ready to start advancing the units in that area of the map. Please note that I used this method while playing the easiest play setting on the game and found that the attack on the unit defending hex 16,24 will not produce a retreat when playing the historical level of difficulty. However, the computer does move the unit on its turn and with luck (assuming the unit can't blow the bridge), it is possible to force a retreat in turn two with the three 62 VG units attacking.

By getting German units moving in turn two, you can capture Bastogne before it is occupied, even though you probably won't keep it for the whole game. Speaking of Bastogne, I have found that you cannot expect to take it and hold it and expect to win the game.

Alton W. Bunn Jr.
Hampton, VA

MECH BRIGADE
(Strategic Simulations, Inc.)

When playing either an offensive or defensive role, remember the importance of your ATGM (Anti-Tank Guided Missiles). Try not to fire these missiles past a range of 1,000 yards (you'll miss!). When choosing targets with ATGM's, do not select targets in woods areas because the thick foliage causes the missiles to be less effective.

In target selection, try to eliminate units with only one or two tanks in them. These are company command units. Taking out these units disorganizes the rest of the company while decreasing their accuracy.

Try to place infantry units stacked upon each other. Place these units at places enemy armor is sure to pass through (e.g. bridges, villages). When enemy units attack, they usually try to destroy one or two units at a time. With stacked infantry, this allows other units in the same area to function with improved accuracy and more firepower. Set the range of the infantry units to 0 in order to allow maximum accuracy for their LAW (Light Anti-Tank Weapon) missiles.

Paul Ringuetto
West Newbury, MA



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by Roy Wagner

THE COMMODORE KEY

WHERE IS (S)HE?

I like to see educational games that are not obvious educational games. Just such a game is WHERE IN THE WORLD IS CARMEN SANDIEGO? from Broderbund. Billed as a mystery exploration game, this game hides its educational value behind the guise of searching around the world for the thief of various stolen objects.

There are ten possible suspects (five of each sex). One of the possible suspects is Carmen Sandiego. You must identify the thief using clues pertaining to their sex, hobby, hair, features, and auto. Using the INTERPOL Crime Computer and these characteristics, you are able to obtain a warrant to arrest the thief. But you must catch them as they travel from one country to another.

In each country, you can investigate up to three local locations for clues, but you must watch your time since you have less than a week to capture the thief. These locations can provide you with clues to the identity of the thief or to the next country to which they are going.

Clues about other countries refer to the units of currency used, points of interest, or color on that nation's flag. To help you determine the correct country, the game provides you with a copy of the WORLD ALMANAC which will often need to be referenced. You are also provided with list of flight connections that limit the number of possible countries.

Each game is different. Your goal is to solve enough cases to advance you through the detective ranks to reach the top at which point you may retire and have your name added the Hall of Fame. Your current rank and number of cases solved is maintained on the Acme Detective Roster. Fortunately and favorably for an educational game, you are not punished for cases you don't solve, but rewarded for your successful solutions.

This game can be played using a joystick or from the keyboard. The graphics are nice and the manual is well written with a dossier on each thief. The game is good for schools or played as family activity. Everyone is sure to learn something.

WHERE AM I?

Another game of travel, this time through time and space, is TASS TIMES IN TONETOWN from Activision (by Interplay who also did MINDSHADOW). This is a graphic adventure that takes you from the present to another reality. It starts in Gramps house and Gramps is not there. You eventually discover one of his inventions and it transports you to Tonetown.

This is no ordinary town, at least not one that you have ever been to. The language spoken is a cross between Valley talk and the future. Upon arriving you had better get yourself "tass" with a glitter dyecut and jumpsuit with hooplet, otherwise you will be certain to be spotted for a tourist and returned to a reality you can recognize.

In Tonetown, Gramps is quite well accepted and has recently disappeared. It is up to you to help find him. You are sure to be on the receiving end of a lot of interesting conversation and will discover many new objects. Ennio, the legendary dog reporter, will be your doggy-guide.

Most of your adventuring can be done with a joystick and the many icons that are displayed. Objects that you wish to know more about can be pointed to for a description. The keyboard can also be used as necessary or even for all actions. If not needed the graphic scenes can be hidden away. The graphics are not much of a problem because they are displayed quickly.

This game is a relatively easy adventure with the added twist of the reality in which it is played. Get tass, stay tone-ly and find Gramps.

CHECKMATE

I have always enjoyed the game of chess. I remember the first chess game for a "home" computer was MICROCHESS for a 2K KIM and even though it only used 4 LEDs for display, it played a good game of chess. A version with graphics was later done for the 8K Commodore PET. This version stayed around for a long time even though SARGON II and III came out for the Apple.

Even when the C64 appeared, SARGON took a long time to be released. A favorite of mine that came out for the C64 before SARGON was CHESS and HOW ABOUT A NICE GAME OF CHESS? from Odesta. These offered nearly every conceivable option and had excellent manuals and keyboard controls. Even when SARGON finally did get released for the C64, the conversion was done very poorly, so I still favored those from Odesta.

Another recent chess program was PAUL WHITEHEAD TEACHES CHESS from Enlightenment. This program is more of a chess tutor than player, but does contain a very good coffeehouse computer opponent.

The newest program, CHESSMASTER 2000 from Software Country, is by far the best one for the home computer. The Chess Federation unofficially gives CHESSMASTER a rating of over 2000 points (SARGON III is rated 1850). It is a tough opponent for most human players.

See AMIGA PREFERENCES for details since it contains nearly all the features of the Amiga version, including a three dimensional display. Exceptions missing are use of joystick/mouse for options (C64 version has easy to use CTRL key selections) and movement and the option to analyze a game after it is played.

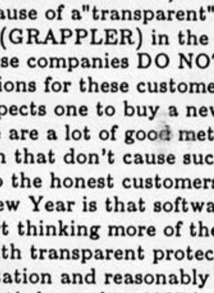
NEW YEAR WISH

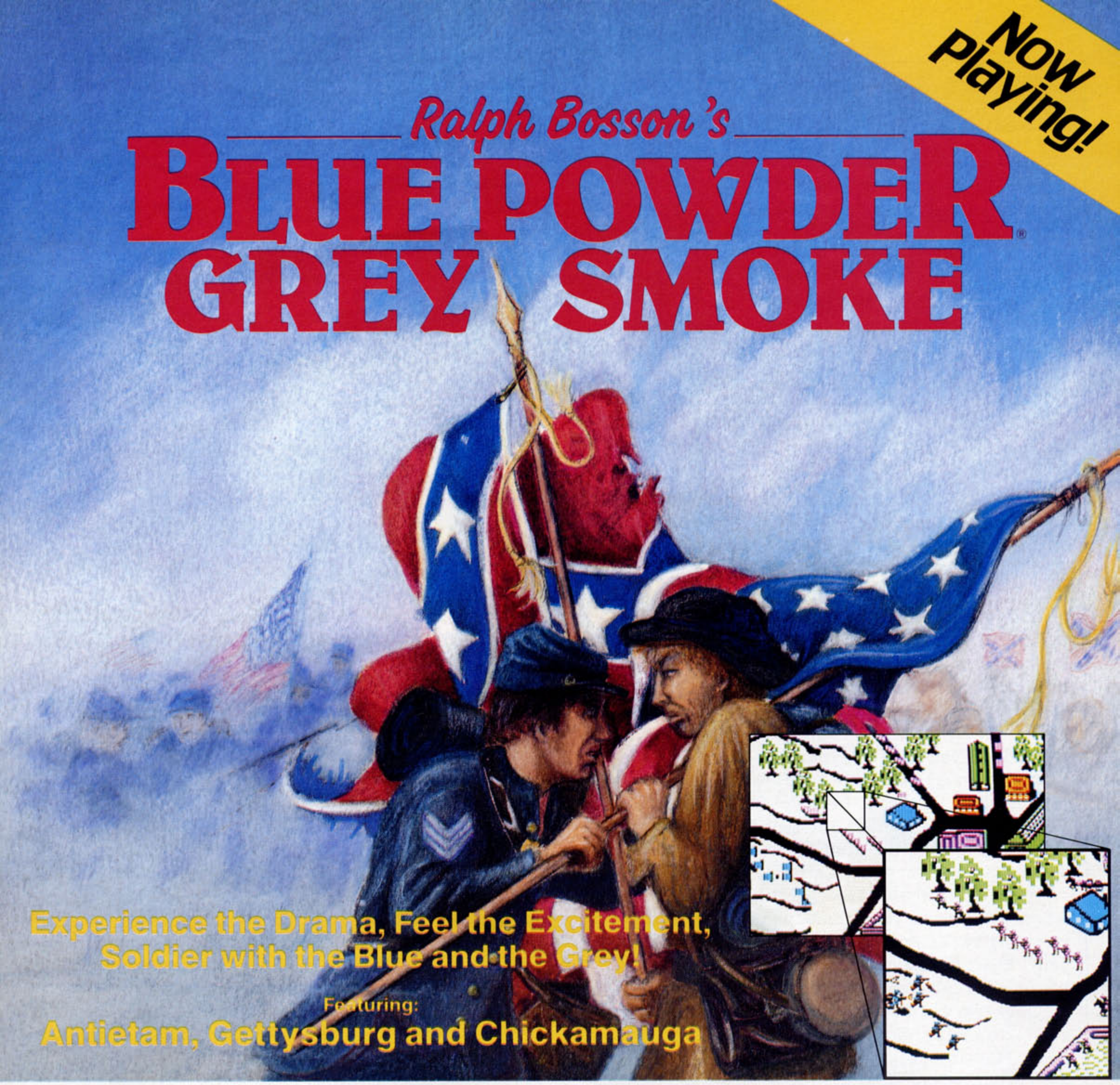
Game software probably loses more sales to SOFTWARE PIRATES (legally known as thieves) than any other commodity. I have no objection with a distributor trying to protect its product except when it starts seriously interfering with the honest people who pay for the product.

Honest customers should not be inconvenienced by requirement of removing any cables or fast load cartridges, just because these are the means that thieves are stealing their product. People paying good (often high) prices for their software should not have it abnormally abuse their hardware to protect the distributors from thieves.

There is software that uses the printer (NEWSROOM and GEOS) that does not work because of a"transparent" printer interface (GRAPPLER) in the cartridge slot. These companies DO NOT EVEN offer versions for these customers, but rather expects one to buy a new interface.

There are a lot of good methods of protection that don't cause such inconveniences to the honest customers. My wish for the New Year is that software distributors start thinking more of their customers with transparent protection, good documentation and reasonably priced upgrades. Let's hope that 1987 is the year of the CUSTOMER.





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Shard of Spring

by Scorpia

Name:	Shard of Spring
System:	Apple, C-64
# Players:	One
Price:	$40.00
Designers:	Craig Roth
	David Stark
Publisher:	Strategic Simulations
	Mountain View, CA

Ymros. Island of eternal springtime, blessed with perfect weather through the magic of a green crystal called The Shard of Spring. But now the Shard lies in the hands of Siriadne, the evil dragon-enchantress, who threatens to destroy the crystal, unless the people of Ymros meet her harsh demands. Each year her demands grow greater while the people grow poorer; soon there will come a time when Ymros will be unable to pay the ever-increasing tribute, and the island will become a wasteland of ice and desolation. Only the death of Siriadne and the return of the Shard can prevent the destruction of the island. Heroes must go forth and retrieve the Shard, or Ymros is doomed...

And so, you're off again on another quest. Need I say that tough times are in store for you as you ramble about the land, in search of the Shard? Fortunately, you can go out well prepared for the rigors of fighting the multitudes of monsters that await you (and there are certainly plenty of those!).

It begins in the Character Utilities section, where you create your characters and form them into parties. You can have up to five in one group, and I heartily recommend the full complement, because it's a rough world out there.

Only two character classes are available: Warriors and Wizards, but you do get to choose from five races: Human, Troll, Dwarf, Elf, and Gnome. Each has certain advantages and disadvantages: Trolls are strong, but quite slow and not very bright; Elves are fast and smart, but not especially hardy. Dwarves and Trolls may only be fighters; Elves and Gnomes are restricted to Wizards. Humans, lucky creatures, can be either.

Take your time when creating characters. While the process can be tedious, it is worthwhile putting in the effort to get characters with the best possible stats for their professions. Keep the manual handy, and refer to it often, especially the tables in the back of the book. They tell you pretty much what you can expect your characters to be able to do.

Later on, as the characters increase in level, their stats will also increase, but on a random basis, and you have no control over how many or which ones will be raised. Therefore, you really need to start with the best attributes you can manage.

Each class has a number of special skills they can learn; how many is based on intelligence. Some of these skills are more useful than others. For Warriors, you want Armored Skin, Berserking, Dark Vision (only one needs to have this), and a weapon skill, preferably sword. The other skills available to Warriors are not really very useful in the game.

Keep in mind that the non-Human races come with some of these skills already as a bonus. Dwarves, for instance, have skills in Axe and Berserking, while Trolls have Armored Skin. Overall, Dwarves and Humans make better Warriors than Trolls, whose slow speed can become a drawback rather quickly, and their low intelligence makes it hard for them to learn skills.

Wizards can learn five different spell types, as well as some other interesting skills. All Wizards should have Fire Runes, which are the most useful in the game. Wind Runes and Spirit Runes are also good to have; the other two you can pick up later, as your Wizards intelligence increases. Note that Gnomes already come with Spirit RUnes known. Elves come with Item Lore and Weapon Lore, which enables them to identify items found after combat, which is very important. All Wizards should have Priesthood skill to destroy undead creatures, and Monster Lore is quite helpful, as it tells you the strengths of the monsters you are up against.

One thing to remember is that the Skill rating is for combat only; it has absolutely nothing at all to do with spell-casting. So there is no need to worry about Wizards having a low Skill score, because you don't want your Wizards up front in combat anyway.

The Character Utilities section does have one drawback: once your character has been created and saved, there is no way for you to look at it again from this area. Therefore, when creating characters, especially Wizards, keep a piece of paper handy to write down each character's abilities and skills. This will aid you greatly when forming a party, and ensure that everyone in it has the skills you want. You can have up to 25 characters on the disk, in any of five parties, but any character can only be in one party at a time.

Once you've gathered a party, you can send them out on the quest. All parties start just outside a small town called Green Hamlet. It's wise to get in there right away and buy some equipment. All gold is automatically pooled, so there is no need to



transfer money between characters. Each one simply chooses what to purchase, and the gold is deducted from the pool. Food supplies are treated in the same way.

When first starting out, equip your fighters as best you can, and don't worry if your Wizards don't have armor or weapons. All they can wear is robes, which has little protective value, and you'll be keeping the mages as far back from combat as you can, anyway. The Warriors will usually be bearing the brunt of the damage, and they need the best protection you can afford.

Do try to keep some money for healing. A night's sleep in the countryside restores very little in the way of hitpoints (only one, in fact), and a night's stay at an inn not much more. While spells are available for healing, it's better to save spell points for combat. Thus the preferred way to get your people restored is to pay for healing services.

As you roam around the countryside, you will notice that the scene changes according to the time of day or night. In the early morning, much of the area is still dark, and you can't see very far. As the day progresses, there is more light, and you can see further, until the sun starts to set again. You must sleep once a night, and the program will not let you continue if you have been up too long, placing you automatically in camp mode.

Graphics are vaguely reminiscent of Ultima, but are not the same. A single icon represents the entire party as they travel across grasslands, through forests and swamps, and over mountains. When combat occurs (as it frequently will), the scene changes to a close-up of the immediate area, with each member of your party, as well as each monster, represented by a separate figure.

Who goes first is a matter of speed. It could be one of your characters, or it could be a monster. Turns proceed from the fastest to the slowest, so the action will alternate between your characters and their foes, and thus has a great impact on your battle strategy.

Generally, the first thing you want to do is get your Wizards as far away from the monsters as possible, since they usually have the worst armor and fewest hitpoints. Move them in a direct line (if possible) away from the enemy, but remember to save some movement points for spells, if needed. One of your mages should use Monster Lore (which takes no movement points) to determine the strength of your opponents, and which ones are the strongest.

However, if there are any spellcasters among the monsters, always go for those first; they are by far the most dangerous. One or two spells from the enemy can really damage your attack possibilities, not to mention kill your characters!

Hand-to-hand combat is a matter of maneuvering your characters close enough to the monster to hit at it. Sometimes, often many times, you won't be able to do this on the first round. In that case, don't get too close... make the opponent come to you, thus wasting movement points (striking costs movement points, too). This will not always work, as each monster has a pre-determined target, and may not go where you expect it to; several may gang up on a single character. Ouch! On the other hand, with some clever movement on your part, you can lead one or more monsters on a merry chase around the area, keeping them out of combat while the rest of your party beats on the remaining monsters.

Fortunately, you can retreat your characters off the field of battle. One at a time, of course, and you can't bring them back in once they're gone. The drawback to this is each character must leave the battleground at exactly the same spot. You can't just move everyone off to the left side, you have to move them all to the same exit on the left side (or right side, or whatever). The good news is that the monsters won't follow you if you all run away. The bad news is that the monsters themselves never run, no matter how badly they're doing. You either kill them all or retreat.

Gaining levels is hard at first, because experience alone will not do much for you. You have to find the Warrior Guilds and the Wizard Guilds, where training is available that will bring you up to the next level, provided you have acquired the necessary points. Not every town has one of these guilds, so it takes some searching before you can begin to advance. The training itself, however, is free.

Most towns have a tavern, where you can buy food and pick up some helpful information. Always

visit the tavern to pick up what gossip you can. You only have to do this once, since the information in each tavern never varies, but write down what you find out, as some of it is crucial to finishing the game.

It's also a good idea to note down what facilities each town has, such as armories, inns, healers, magic supplies, and so forth, as well as prices. Not every town has every type of shop, and if you need healing in a hurry, you want to know where you can get it. The same is true for equipment: you want the best available at the lowest prices.

One problem with equipment is you can buy it, but you can't sell it. The only thing you can do with unwanted items is drop them (or pass them along to some other member of the party who can use them). Since the number of objects a character can carry is limited, only keep what you really need, and get rid of everything else.

Magical items and potions can be bought if you have enough money, or found (sometimes) after a successful combat. The trick is figuring out what the thing does after you have it. Potions are always used on characters; they heal, increase speed, add to armor protection, unpoison, and so forth. Wands, rods, rings, and staves, however, have varying effects, some beneficial, some baneful.

A few can be figured out (a ring of chains, for instance), but for the most part, you will need to experiment. Even the Identify abilities only tell you what an item is, not what it does. The safest thing to do is wait for combat with relatively weak monsters (like kobolds) and try the item out on one of them, to see what happens. Never try an unknown item on your own party; you may well end up slicing your best fighter into instant sushi.

However, don't think that you can always depend on these things. Magical goodies can be helpful, but they have a distressing tendency to break and become useless just when you need them most, not to mention, they don't always work, either. Sometimes an item will break after just one use. This is randomly determined each time you use the item, and there is no telling when it will happen. It keeps things interesting.

Also, keep in mind that a Wizard can use Identify only once per day, regardless of what is being identified. For example, if a Wizard has just identified a potion, that's it... he won't be able to identify another thing, potion or not, until the next day.

Eventually, you'll be feeling strong enough to go poking around in the dungeons. There are several of them scattered around the countryside, and you'll have to enter all of them, as each has something of importance necessary to completing the game. The one in the forest is the easiest of the bunch, so start with that, but not right away. I'd recommend going up a level or two first.

Dungeons are dark places, but if at least one member of the party has Dark Vision, you won't need a torch (which is good for one use only). You'll be able to see and get around pretty well. However, a lantern is a good thing to have, since it lights up more area, giving you a better view of the immediate vicinity.

Be aware that many of the dungeons have secret doors and secret passages. If you haven't found what you're looking for, then probably you have missed one of them, that will lead you to what you want. While relatively small in size, dungeons can be tricky places.

The trickiest (and meanest) of all is Ralith, the abode of Siriadne (who, despite the box cover, is a dragon, not a human). Take your time in this place, because it is a very hard one to get through. The wandering monsters in particular are powerful, and

will cause you much trouble. Don't be afraid to run if you find your group is over-matched. Remember that wandering monsters are random encounters, and may not be there the next time you come by. However, you do have to wipe out all the fixed monsters, and you can't do this in one sitting (unless your group happens to be very powerful and very lucky).

Go as far as you can, then teleport out, heal up, restore spell points, and return. Since the dungeon status is saved to disk, you won't have to fight the same monsters in the same rooms over and over again, although the random ones will be popping up every so often. The best thing you can bring with you here are Elven gems. These restore spell points, and you will be using a LOT of spells in this place. Frequent saving of your position also comes in handy (but will have no effect on the status of the dungeon itself, which is stored separately).

Of course, it's going to be awhile before you're ready for that encounter. I don't recommend attempting Ralith with less than eighth level characters. Your party will need to be high in spell points and hit points, and these come only with advancement.

That brings up one of the sore points in the game. It isn't too hard to get up several levels quickly, but after that, advancement drags tremendously. Check out the level guide in the back of the manual, and you'll see that you need a lot of points to move up after about 8th-9th level. What makes it so difficult is the fact that high-level monsters do not come with high-level experience points.

The two hardest places in Shard are Islanda and Ralith, where you start running into the heavy-duty critters. However, even so, the average number of points you'll get per encounter is only in the 150-200 range. When your characters need 30,000 points to get to the next level, that makes for a heckuva lot of encounters, and a lot of tedious fighting. Polishing off Siriadne and her friends is worth about 10,000 points, but that comes at the end of the quest, when you need the points least of all.

Still, a well-developed party of characters in the mid-range should be able to get through the final castle and obtain the Shard. I did it once with 10th level characters, and then with 8th level characters, so it is definitely possible (the second time is a bit easier, since you've been through it and know everything that has to be done, as well as what monsters you have to face).

The graphics, while not spectacular, are good, even in monochrome. The monster icons (which come with both a front view and a side view) are well-done, and animate a bit in combat: the rattlesnake strikes out, the evil fighter thrusts his sword, the mountain giant pounds on you with his fist, and so on, adding a nice touch to the game.

Sound effects in the game are fairly limited, mostly strange noises in battle or when you bump into a solid object, such as a wall. Fortunately, you can turn these off, although you'll have to wait until your first combat to do this.

Shard comes on one double-sided disk. You can make a copy of the back side to play from (the utility for doing this is included on the master disk). You can also use this utility to make a backup of the playing disk, in case of disaster (of one kind or another). Read the manual carefully before starting to play, especially the hints section and tables at the back of the book. You'll get off to a better start that way.

Bottom line: Overall, a good romp of the hack-and-slash type.



1986 In Review

By Bob Proctor

Here we go again. This column is a "1986 In Review Plus Recommended Games For Late Christmas Shoppers" special. My chance to sit back and throw brickbats and kudos at the educational software industry.

The award for Best Value of the Year goes to Microzine from Scholastic Software. Each volume is a disk with four educational programs (Apple II only). It is published 7 times a year and shows up in the mail; you either send the disk back or buy it for $30. Microzine has been around for a while but Scholastic has improved it; they are putting their best games out on these disks, not rejects that they couldn't sell any other way.

Uptime is a brand new "disk magazine" for Apple II users. This one is monthly and even cheaper—as little as $7 for a disk of 10 or more programs! However, you don't have an option to reject the disk. There are only a few educational games per disk and they are not nearly as professional as those in Microzine.

Sunburst Communications is one of the more remarkable stories in the software biz. They are one of a handful of companies that get by publishing ONLY educational software. They stand out in this select group because they continue to publish many new titles while everyone else is content to sell established products.

When I started writing this column a few years back, I stressed the importance of motivation and said the best educational software motivated by being fun. I still believe this, but a few years of testing software on the neighborhood kids have made me modify my position slightly. The interest and participation of a concerned "mentor" can be an equally powerful motivator and the only effective one in some cases.

To this end, Sunburst programs come with a large 3-ring binder of documentation that contains the usual stuff—how to boot the disk and play the game—but also tells a parent or teacher how to interact with the student(s). In some cases, this section is extensive and includes worksheets or maps which can be copied. You pay a little more for this, all Sunburst titles sell for $59.

While I do not believe that microcomputers will replace our school system (as was suggested recently by a famous futurist who writes for several computer publications), I do agree that there are deficiencies in the system and that a computer at home can be an excellent supplement if parents get involved. What is all too common here in California is that the school has a computer or two but the staff lacks the time or the knowledge to use them. It's too bad because research is accumulating to show that teaching the use of computers helps the student in other areas as well.

Here is where Sunburst is coming to the rescue. They have filled in their product line to where they now offer a well-rounded curriculum on computing. Their Type To Learn program teaches keyboard skills for grades 3 to 8 (but see below for a better program for older people). Their Magic Slate word processor can be used to do assignments at all levels but also has lessons on language for grades 2-3. Their Bank Street School Filer is similar, a data base program with supplemental lessons and sample data about the USA.

Of course, they still have all of the games on problem solving skills in both language and math. The best new one is called The Royal Rules. This is similar to The King's Rule but with the important addition that you can now make up your own rules for someone else to guess. A "rule" is something that 3 numbers, like (2,4,6), have in common. You can test other sets of numbers, like (14,16,18), and find out if they also fit the rule (yes it does). Then you try to state the rule—in this case you'd say "3 consecutive ascending even numbers" and be wrong! It's simpler than that, it's just "3 even numbers". If we had tested (10,8,6) and (4,16,12) we would have discovered that. The lesson here is not only "Don't jump to conclusions" but how to formulate and test ideas in a scientific manner. It's fun!

There have been half a dozen "educational word processors" released this year. This qualifies as some kind of trend but it's mostly hype, just a way to get you to buy a ho-hum WP program. Two that are worth considering, besides Magic Slate, are Writer Rabbit from The Learning Company ($40, aimed at the very young, ages 7-8) and Homeworker from Davidson ($90, but also includes outliner, calculator and other tools suitable for a high school student). Both programs are for Apple II.

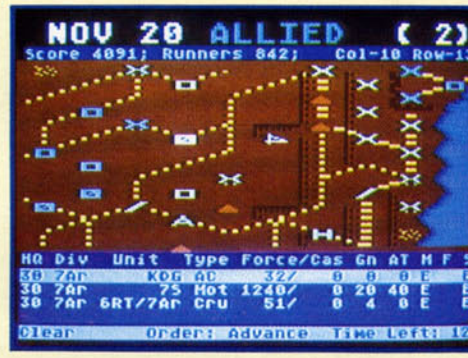
1986 was a poor year for start-ups. The only new educational software company that I am aware of is Learning Well. They have three new games called Safety First, Health Watch and Drug Alert!; all unusual because of the topics. Unfortunately, these are pretty dull games. Drug Alert! is the worst; it's an adventure game where you must answer questions about drug use and abuse to "escape" from a squalid building full of addicts and pushers. But it only takes 20 minutes to finish and it's the same every time. There is a data base on drugs which is more interesting than the game but access is slow and there is no incentive to use it once you know the answers to the 4 questions in the game. The other two titles consist of three games each. Health Watch, the best, has a game on choosing a balanced diet, one on dental hygiene, and one on exercise. It would help someone in the third grade understand some concepts in these areas but it's not going to generate any repeat play.

The Improving the Breed Award goes to Type! from Broderbund. This combines the best features of all of the touch typing programs that came before it: instruction on fingering, excellent diagnostics, drills on real English including your own customized text. Type! is available for the Apple II, the IBM PC and (soon) for the C64.

The Game of the Year is Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego? also from Broderbund. This game actually came out last year but too late to be mentioned in this column. Rather than describe it here now, I'll talk about the sequel, Where in the USA is Carmen Sandiego? in the next column. ■

ROMMEL

BATTLES FOR TOBRUK



1941: Rommel's Afrika Korps was besieging the strategic port of Tobruk. The British 8th Army attacked three times to raise the siege: Operations Brevity, Battleaxe, and Crusader. On the third try, Rommel retreated. But the next spring he was back, sweeping around the flank of 8th Army's Gazala Line and into Tobruk, forcing the British all the way back to El Alamein.

Rommel gives you four different games: all the battles for Tobruk. Now you can experience the sweeping maneuver and hard-fought tank battles of the desert war with the incredible historical detail that only GDW can provide: battalion-level historical units, counting individual tanks (by type, from L3s to Matildas), men, artillery, and anti-tank guns; a game system that fully models combined-arms combat; detailed supply and air war systems. We put history in so you get history out. And it's remarkably easy to play.



- ★Simultaneous hidden movement—limited intelligence
- ★Real combined arms interactions
- ★Detailed model of unit morale
- ★Tactical and strategic maps
- ★Computer plays either side at three skill levels
- ★Save game and play by mail options
- ★Change options in mid-game—even change sides
- ★Keyboard or joystick control
- ★Minefields and fortifications
- ★Fatigue and regrouping
- ★Complete documentation
- ★Extensive historical notes

The Battle of Chickamauga

One of the bloodiest and most evenly matched battles of the Civil War. You command a Union or Confederate army of 50,000 men: brigades of infantry or cavalry with attached artillery. The computer keeps track of each man and gun, plus changing unit morale, fatigue, and communications status.

Rommel: $40; Chickamauga: $35. Disk for Atari computers with 48k. Both coming soon for Apple and Commodore computers. If there is no store in your area, you can order direct from GDW. Add $1 per game for handling.

History In—History Out

GDW Game Designers' Workshop

P.O.Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61702-1646

(309)452-3632

A GDW Computer War Game

by Roy Wagner

TWO UNDER PAR

Two excellent golf simulations are available for the Amiga. Both are based on very popular prior versions for other computers and their conversions to the Amiga have been well done.

LEADERBOARD first appeared for the C64 as an excellent new game with digitized sounds, great graphics and very realistic play. The version on the Amiga improves on everything about the game.

One to four can play at three levels with various player affects: Pro (Wind and Hook/Slice), Amateur (Hook/Slice) and Novice. All players use the same tee location. From 18 to 72 holes can be played on your choice of four fictional courses. You could even choose to play the same course four times.

You have a choice of 3 woods, 9 irons, a pitching wedge and putter. Before going on the course you can practice. You hit the ball using the left mouse button and a small gauge on the right side of the screen. Holding the button down starts the shot as a percentage of power bar goes up on the gauge. You set the power when and where you release the button. You must release the button before the top of the gauge. Then you must set the snap by pressing the button at a mark on the gauge that indicates contact with the ball. Snapping too early will cause a hook, too late a slice.

As complicated as it may sound, with some practice at the driving range, it becomes quite natural. Unfortunately there is no chance to practice putting.

Once on the course, you MUST select the proper club. The manual contains a nice chart showing the average distances for each type of club. You aim your shot using a little "cursor" that is in front of the player using the right mouse button. An overview of the hole with distances is available at anytime. Once you reach the green, you are automatically provided with a putter and a much large gauge on the left side of the screen. Each mark on the gauge represents eight feet of hitting power.

The putting green has a marker on it that indicates the slope of the green from where you are standing. This slope is very critical in making your shot and the affect of the break of the green is very nicely simulated.

Other things that you must deal with are water hazards (far less than the C64 version), sand traps, rough, and out of bounds. Club selection must be adjusted for the various conditions. The bounce that the ball takes varies with the terrain



and club used but seems rather consistent each time.

The game has an autodemo mode, does not have a save option, does not save the top scores, and only scores for Stroke play. The graphics are excellent and very quickly displayed. A single player game can be played very quickly. Some of the holes are quite tough.

MEAN 18 first appeared for the IBM-pc and has been very popular for that machine. But the Amiga version is much better. The game can be icon selected or run executed directly. It does not require a cold start and can be multi-tasked with other programs if you have sufficient memory. The game disk can be copied and is only required to start the game (key disk).

One to four can play at two levels with various player affects: Experienced and Novice (Caddy selects best club and you are given the aim for the next shot). You have your choice of Pro or Regular tee location. You have your choice of four courses: Pebble Beach, Augusta, St. Andrews and a fictional Bushmill. You can even create your own course using an outstanding course architect program.

You have a choice of 3 woods, 8 irons, a sand & pitching wedge and putter. Before going on the course you can practice. You hit the ball using the left mouse button and a large gauge on the left side of the screen. Pressing the button starts the shot as a percentage of power bar goes up on the gauge. You set the power when and where you press the button again. You must release the button before the top of the gauge. Then you must set the snap by pressing the button at a mark on the gauge that indicates contact with the ball. Snapping too early will cause a hook, too late a slice.

Unlike LEADERBOARD, MEAN 18 give you an opportunity to practice putting. On the putting green which contains all varieties of slopes and breaks, you can select the position of the hole and your ball.

Once on the course, if you are selecting your clubs, the manual contains a nice chart showing a fixed distance for each type of club. You aim your shot using arrows to turn your player left or right (the scenery scrolls by as you do this) using the left mouse button. An overview of the hole is available at anytime. Also shown is each player's shots. Once you reach the green, you are automatically provided with a putter. Each mark on the gauge now represents eight feet of hitting power.

The putting green has a markers on it that indicates the slope of the green from where you are standing. This slope is very critical in making your shot and the affect of the break is noticeable.

Other things that you must deal with are water hazards sand traps, rough, and out of bounds. Club selection must be adjusted for the various conditions. The bounce that the ball takes varies with the terrain and club used, is variable, and very realistic. The trees can sometime appear quite immense.

A game can be saved after any hole, the Top 10 scores are saved for each course, a score card can be printed. You can play either Stroke, Match or Best Hole. The graphics and sounds are excellent. There is an annoying BELL between each play and some excessive mouse movements for some options. The holes from the various known courses are very well represented.

IN CONCLUSION: These are both outstanding golf games. Each has its own merits. I wish I could just merge the two into one fantastic game. LEADERBOARD has wind effects, an excellent putting green with distances measured in yards, feet and inches. I find it ironic that this game does NOT have a permanent leader board of top scorers.

Overall, I find that MEAN 18 has more that makes it a better game; "real" courses, a practice putting green, a caddy option to select the proper clubs, a SAVE game option, and a "vanity" board for the top scores on each course. I have come to expect these last two options in all games. Another big plus for MEAN 18 is the optional program that lets you create/modify any course.

CHECKMATE

CHESSMASTER 2000 from Software Country is the first chess program to be released for the Amiga. It comes after a long history of chess programs for the home computer (see Commodore Key). Each new chess program is generally a significant improvement over its predecessor with more options and stronger play algo-

rithms. This one is definitely no exception. This program is loaded with nearly every conceivable option and 100 historic games from 1620 to 1986). These include two between Kasparov and Karpov (1985) and wins against SARGON III (1986). SARGON III was the top rated home computer chess program with 1850 points unofficially from the Chess Federation. CHESSMASTER 2000 is rated unofficially at over 2000 points.

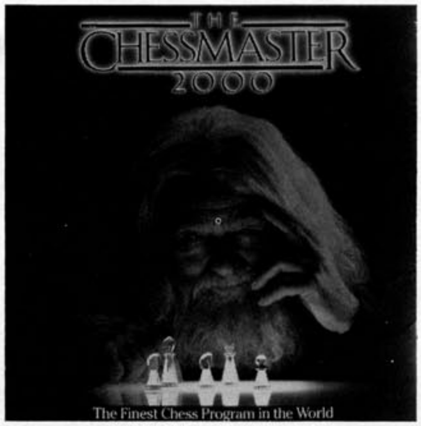
The display on the Amiga is outstanding. The board and pieces can be displayed in two or three dimensions and as a wood or metal chess set. When moving pieces, you can use the mouse to "pick up" the piece and move it, or enter algebraic/abbreviated algebraic notation from the keyboard. The board can be rotated 90 degrees in either direction. A display of board coordinates and a clock can be switched on and off. With the Amiga version, you can change the colors of the pieces and/or board. Many of the options that are changed for your preferences can be saved to be used each time that you load the program.

CHESSMASTER will only let you move to legal squares. With "teaching" mode on, the legal squares are highlighted for each piece you choose to move. Castling and En Passant moves are recognized and handled automatically. Pawn Promotion will let you choose the piece that you want.

You can begin a new game at anytime with your opponent being either another human or Chessmaster. Chessmaster will even play against itself. There are 12 levels of play (20 in the C64 version). These levels vary the amount of time that Chessmaster takes determining the next move. If you don't care to wait, you can force Chessmaster to move. A beginner can select Easy Mode, which turns off Chessmaster's ability to think ahead while it waits for you to move and Newcomer Style, for the easiest game.

There are three styles of play: Normal (mixes best and random moves), Best (always makes best move), and Coffeehouse (more random moves). Chessmaster has a library of 71,000 opening moves and tactics which can be turned off so that it will not be used against your play. You can take back a move by either player, replay a move, and change sides. You can easily setup a position to play out a classic strategy or solve a chess problem. These setups or partial/completed games can be saved to disk, loaded and erased with a menu option.

There are several things that can be displayed while the game is being played. These include: pieces captured, moves so



far, Chessmaster's "thinking", score and line of play predicted by Chessmaster, and a suggestion as to what might be your best move. The sound options can also be changed from "voice" to music to bell to silence. These sounds vary for different types of moves. (C64 version only has one type of sound.)

And then there are some further "extras". Chessmaster will analyze a game after it has be played, showing the best move with score and line of play and saving the analysis to disk in a file that can be printed. It will print moves so far or print each move as it is made. Finally you can save many of the settings that you have made or reset them all back to the "factory" settings.

Overall this is a well rounded chess program with its extensive opening move library, mid-game use of classical and modern strategies, and uses the finest new computer end game algorithms. Its library of 100 classic games can be used to learn from the play of masters. The graphics are exceptional and with the mouse game play is easy. This program is highly recommended. For more information see the feature review of Chessmaster 2000 in the November 1986 issue of CGW (#32).

LEFT ME COLD

Polarware has released three interactive computer novels for the Amiga: OOTOPOS (Sci-Fi), TRANSYLVANIA and CRIMSON CROWN (Fantasy-Horror). Crimson Crown has slow graphics that are sometimes good but often poor. Fortunately the graphics can be turned off when not wanted. The interface is predominately keyboard with only N-S-E-W movement, LIST, SAVE, LOAD, NEW, and QUIT mouse selected. It does not use menus and must be booted with a cold start.

Polarware states in their newsletter that they have an "assault on prices" with lower prices. These prices are $17.95 for the Apple and C64 version, $19.95 for the Macintosh, Atari ST, and IBM version and $29.95 for the Amiga. YES YOU READ THAT RIGHT, $29.95 for the Amiga version! WHY???

I called them on this to confirm what I had read and they said that they had to price it at that price because of their high development costs for the Amiga conversion. And that the Amiga was so hard to work with. I have talked to a lot of other programmers from several other companies and they have all said how easy it is to write for the Amiga. Obviously Polarware is using programmers who know very little about the Amiga or are trying to force coding conventions from other computers onto the Amiga. I know that I could write a better looking program for the Amiga using AmigaBasic, and it would be faster.

If you want an outstanding graphic adventure, I suggest you spend $15.00 more and buy PAWN from Firebird Software. This illustrated text fantasy adventure shows how well something can be done for the Amiga when one KNOWS the machine. (I hope to have a detailed review of this program in the next issue.) Others worth considering are MINDSHADOW and TASS TIMES IN TONETOWN for the Amiga from Activision.

CHRIS CRAWFORD

In CGW #32 we began a series of Designer Profiles when we interviewed Alan Miller of Accolade and Brian Moriarty of Infocom. In this issue we have the first half of Frank Boosman's fascinating interview with computer game pundit Chris Crawford. The interview will conclude in CGW #34.

In Silicon Valley, a part of the world where computer stores are the size of supermarkets, Chris Crawford is refreshingly different. His directions led me up a twisting, winding road, out of the city and up into the hills. Chris's house looks like any other country home: there's a big yard with ducks,



geese, goats, cats, dogs, and a multitude of other farm animals. The ducks and geese have their own private pond. Looking at his house or at Chris himself—in his work shirt and floppy hat, no less—one would never guess that he's one of the world's premier computer game designers. But as the saying goes, appearances can be deceiving, and that's rarely truer than with Chris.

In this two-part interview, Chris talks about his philosophy of game design, his successes and failures, his ideas on future game design, and more.

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CGW: Chris, for the benefit of the people who will be reading this interview but who might not have read the book,the articles in Computer Gaming World, or seen you in the American Express commercial...

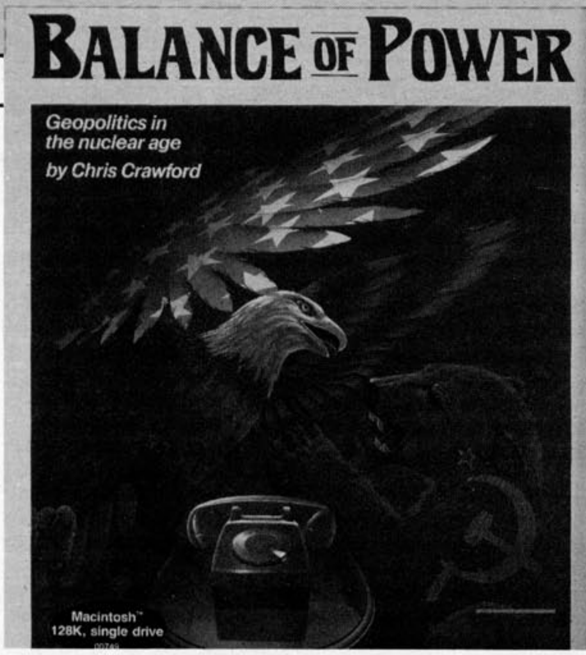
Chris: (laughs)

CGW: ...tell us a little bit about how you got your start in the business.

Chris: Let's see... I was a wargamer; that was my hobby for a long time. I ran into a fellow in 1974 at the University of Missouri Columbia Computer Center who was working on a computerized version of the Avalon Hill game **Blitzkrieg** and I thought he was crazy, but I was curious about the possibilities and a year later I attempted to tackle the problem. I thought about it for a few months before I decided that it really could be solved, although I wasn't going to try Blitzkrieg. But I *did* put together a game in FORTRAN on an IBM 1130 and it first ran in 1976 and it was the forerunner of what became **Tanktics**. The next step was for me to buy my own computer. I bought an KIM-1, put together by MOS Technologies. I did a game on that machine and then the Commodore PET came out. I bought one, did Tanktics on the PET and sold it myself because there were no software publishers in those days. First copies sold December 30, 1978. I sold about 150 copies of Tanktics. Then I did another game called **Legionnaire**, nowhere near like the later version, which I sold about 100 copies of. Tanktics I sold for fifteen bucks, that including a map board and counters... Legionnaire I sold for ten dollars—software prices were lower in those days. Then I joined Atari. For Atari I did **Energy Czar, Scram, Eastern Front 1941** and a book called **De Re Atari**. While I was at Atari, I did new editions of **Tanktics** and **Legionnaire** for Avalon Hill. I did **Excalibur** and a game called **Gossip**. I did a book called **The Art of Computer Game Design**. After being laid off from Atari I did **Balance of Power** as a freelancer. I have just finished **Patton Versus Rommel** for Electronic Arts. So that's what I've done.

CGW: Why computer game design instead of anything else?

Chris: My goals have changed over time. Initially, I got into computer games as a hobby. War games were my hobby, I wanted to play better war games, but the cardboard war games had many problems. The traditional war games didn't do some of the things I wanted them to, I felt computers could solve a lot of the problems, so I pursued it as a hobby until 1979. Until then I was a teacher. And I greatly enjoyed being a teacher. So, I taught for money and programmed for fun. In 1979 I made the startling discovery that is it far more lucrative and enjoyable to teach for fun and program for money. So, I reversed things and got a job at Atari programming computer games. This I pursued at Atari for a number of years, but I wanted to advance the state of the art. In the very beginning there was this drive to make the greatest, best, most wonderful computer games possible. By 1982 when Alan Kay hired me to form the games research group for his new corporate research group at Atari, that modified slightly. I decided that my new goal was to pursue computer games as an art form. That really doesn't represent a major change. Whereas earlier I simply wanted to do the greatest and most glorious games, now I wanted to do games just as an art form. That's just a variation on the



first goal. I have pursued that goal ever since, although not with any success.

CGW: There are some people who view Chris Crawford games as they view French films. Oh, sure, critics like them, they're probably interesting, there have probably been one or two that had some unique qualities to them, but they're inaccessible and on the whole, they'd much rather go see a Star Wars movie, or the computer game equivalent—they'd much rather play a game of Choplifter. How do you feel about that?

Chris: In many ways, I'll agree with it. That's another way of saying, "Crawford's games aren't fun." And there is some merit in that. I don't strive so much for simple-minded fun. I'm not interested in achieving that. That difference here is more not in what I achieve, but what I am striving for. That is, do you want a game that will give you a few quick laughs or do you want a game that will punch you in the stomach or really affect you?

Perhaps a better analogy would be you can watch Laverne and Shirley on television and go "Har, har, har... look, she got the pie in the face," or you can go see a movie like Apocalypse Now that will devastate you. Or any really great movie that touches you deeply. None of my games are great, none of my games have touched people deeply, but that's what I am learning how to do. I feel confident that someday the threads that I am now weaving will be woven together, possibly not by me, possibly by someone more talented into a game that can affect people as deeply as Kramer vs. Kramer, Out of Africa, or Apocalypse Now or any other really great movie. But none of my games yet can fairly be compared with a good movie. Even if we discount the technological and artistic maturity of the movies... you go back to the early movies, none of my games can hold a candle to any of Charlie Chaplin's works. I don't even think I've reached D.W. Griffith's level yet. I hope that maybe someday I will. I believe that maybe someday I might. If I didn't think that possible, I would get out of the business.

CGW: Which game designers do you have a lot of respect for?

Chris: Dan Bunten, he's damn good. Jon Freeman... that's about it. One of the surprising things about the games biz is that there are so few proven performers. I think there are only three people in the world who have proven their ability to do more than one great game. On the other hand, you've got quite a few people who've done one great game...

CGW: Who are those three "proven" people?

Chris: Dan Bunten, Jon Freeman and Chris Crawford. You look at Jon Freeman, he has done **Archon**; he was very closely involved with **Temple of Asphai** and **Crush, Crumble and Chomp**. Here's a man who's put out a number of very good games. Now Jon has worked with other people and so it's unfair, maybe I should say Freefall—Jon Freeman and Anne Westfall. Anne deserves credit with Jon.

CGW: You talk at times about the futility of group projects. In fact, you talk in your book about how you violated your own standards when you did Excalibur as a team project.

Chris: Yes.

CGW: If for some reason, you, Jon Freeman, Anne Westfall and Dan Bunten came together, what would you think would come out of that?

Chris: If we tried to do a joint project? An enormous cat-fight, because we have different styles. The first question we'd ask is, "What kind of game are we doing?" And I'd step forward and say, "We're doing a Chris Crawford game," and Jon would say, "No, we're doing a Jon Freeman game," and Dan would say, "We're doing a Dan Bunten game," and it wouldn't work. That's not bad, I mean, it's sort of like saying, "Let's get Ludwig von Beethoven to sit down with Johann Strauss and John Lennon and the three of them sort of make music together. What are they going to get? Cacophony!

CGW: I don't know. What did they get when John Lennon and Paul McCartney wrote together?

Chris: Oh, those two were much more similar composers. Born and bred in the same tradition.

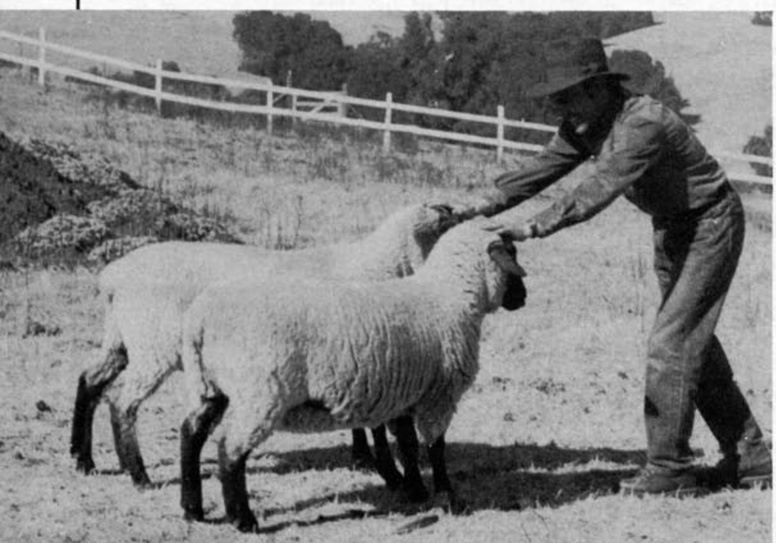
CGW: Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder?

Chris: Yes, they can do that, but I don't see it happening in games.

CGW: You've talked about games and designers that you like and respect. What about games or

genres of games that you don't like? Are there successful games that you've looked at and said, "I'm glad I didn't write that?"

Chris: OK, yeah. I'll list virtually everything in the industry here. Let me start out with text adventures. Text adventures are, in Redmond Simonsen's wonderful phrase, "nothing more than refrigerator lights." An adventure game is about as interesting as a refrigerator light. You open the refrigerator door, the light turns on. You close the refrigerator door, the light turns off. That's the extent of the interaction. The classic problem in any adventure is, how do I get past "X"? And the way that it is solved is that you back off and you go everywhere you can and pick up everything you can and you explore every ridiculous, absurd, possible permutation of objects and actions until you discover that you can get past the troll by reading the book and boring him so much that he falls asleep, then you can sneak past. That is a real case, by the way. And that is the very essence of all adventures. Random strategies. Just get in there and try all sorts of absurd things until you come up with one that works. You know, it's no challenge, it's no interaction, it's no test of your personality or your problem solving abilities or anything like that. It's just random nonsense. So, I don't think much of adventures. Skill and action games occupy the number two position on my list, because skill and action games do not challenge any aspect of a human being. If you ask the question, "What separates us from the animals?," well, it's certainly not skill and action games. I suspect that a cat, if you could rig up a joystick to a cat and convince the cat to go through the silliness of playing Space Invaders, the cat could probably get a much higher score than most human beings. A cat's reflexes are much better than a human being's. So, if you do well at a skill and action game, what does that mean? Well, you're just as good as a cat? Big deal! A good game should challenge what is human about us. It should present a challenge that only you can solve through your own special personality. Skill and action games don't do that. Then there are the hack and slash games. Go down into a dungeon, chop up lots of monsters and gather lots of treasure. These have some potential, but they do get awfully boring after you've slashed your 3000th monster. There's not much in the way of interaction in them. You encounter the monster and there really isn't any choice about what to do. It's not as if you say, "Well, with this monster I'm going to do bladdy, bladdy, blah." It's all pretty much the same thing. OK, see the monster? Kill the monster! Or run from the monster. A few games give you one of two other options, but, again, there really isn't much interaction with the monster. No cleverness, no subtlety, no strategy, no ploys. It's just straight run, kill or be killed. Again, no interaction... not much game. So, right there I've pretty much enclosed much of what we call computer games.



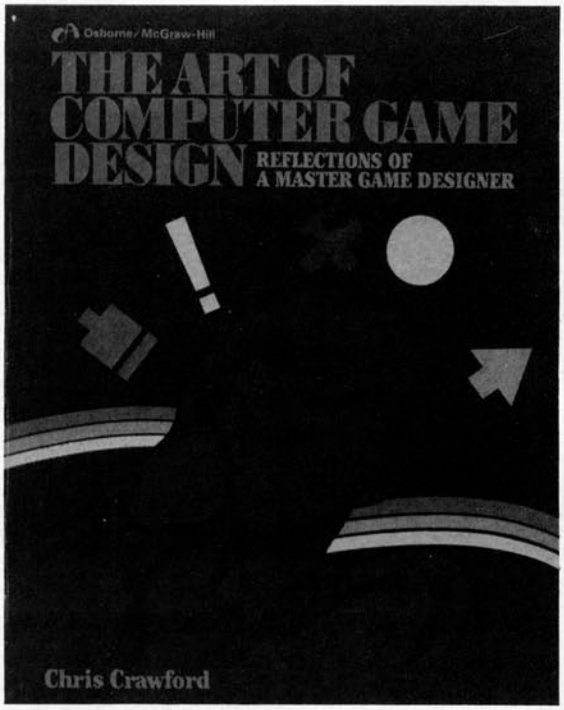
CGW: How do you see games evolving? What do you think computer games will be like in five years, in ten years, in one hundred years?

Chris: The fundamental forces that will govern the evolution of computer games will really be two forces in dynamic tension. The first force is what I will call the techno-cratic. The second force I will call the artistic. the techno-cratic force is the attempt by primarily technical people to present technical achievements as developments in game design. The caricature of this position is the fellow that says, "Wowie, zowie, with this new computer, with this new graphics board and sounds, why when you play our game and you shoot the bad guy, the blood that flows out from the hole in his body will be brilliant red. And he'll gasp and scream the most bloodcurdling scream you can possibly imagine. Explosions will reverberate in your home and your whole house will shake. We'll even give you the smell of death with our special olfactory board!" Essentially no artistic development at all; let's just take what we've got right now and do it bigger and better than ever before.

CGW: And yet something must be said for technical developments. Certainly Star Wars wouldn't have been half as good twenty or thirty years earlier.

Chris: Yes and no. Certainly technical developments don't hurt, in fact certainly technical devel-

opments do help. Our problem right now is that of, let's see... a man in Antarctica, all alone with 33 tons of every imaginable food and drink that he could want and not a stitch of clothing. That is, our technical development has come a long way, you can still have more, it's always nice to have more...



hey, we don't have Gelato here... why not have that? Or I'd sure like some Kentucky Fried Chicken to go along with these 33 tons of other food; it give me more choice. But, our artistic development is so abysmal that talk of further technical improvements now turns me off. I definitely want to have a half a megabyte of RAM and a 68000, that is, I turn my nose up at a Commodore 64 or an Apple //. Those machines are so gutless. I don't feel I can do an interesting game on them, so, yes, I demand at least 20 tons of food!

CGW: You don't think that you can do an interesting game on a Commodore 64?

Chris: No.

CGW: In your book, *The Art of Computer Game Design*, four years ago you said...

Chris: I said if I had to choose between the technical and the artistic, if I had to choose between no artistic development and no technical development, I'd go for no technical development. And I also said that I could be perfectly happy with an Atari 800 for at least five more years. Well, first, five years have passed. Second, we're not talking about an Atari 800... we're talking about a Commodore 64 or an Apple //.

CGW: As long as we are talking a little bit about hardware, why the Mac and what has been your experience with it?

Chris: I will say that in the Mac's case part of my preference is the historical factor. The Mac was the first 68000 system to come out. I have always emphasized the importance of processing power. I was getting a little tired of what a one- or two-megahertz 6502 could do; it's pretty limited. The 68000 can really crunch hard. When Mac came out, there was really nothing that could come remotely close to the Mac in the terms of just raw horsepower. And so I knew that this was the machine that I wanted. That was the first reason. The second reason that I wanted that machine was that it had a pre-defined user interface. That's terribly important because whenever a user sits down to play a game he has to talk to the computer through a language. With the Atari, I had to invent a completely new language every time I did a game.

CGW: You've talked about the advantages of the Mac and yet you've been known to rail against the Mac at times for the low sales of games. And I've heard that from other people.

Chris: This is a problem with all the 68000 systems. None of them are supporting heavy games sales. In fact, different publishers put different twists on it. But, it seems right now that it's close to an even horse race. That is, if you have a game in your hand ready to go and you can instantly have it on an Atari, Mac or Amiga, the odds are that it will sell roughly the same amount of units on each machine, though most people will agree that the Atari will sell a bit less than the other two. There is some question about the long-term buyer. That is, one thing we notice with Mac is that it seems to keep selling month in, month out, where as the Atari purchasers seem to be all first-time purchasers.

CGW: So, are you happier now about Balance of Power sales than you were a few months ago?

Chris: Well, yeah, in that there have been more sales in the last few months. It's not the sales curve going up or going down. It just seems to be plugging along steadily. Actually, what will make Balance of Power sell will be the translations. My guess now is that the Mac version will never pay for itself, by itself. Considering the amount of time I put into it, the amount of money I spent on equipment, Balance of Power, if there were only a Mac version will have been a failure financially for me. [Ed. Note: The IBM version of Balance of Power has now been released which pleases Chris' bankbook no doubt.]

nomic side to the game with production rates. 15 levels of difficulty. The computer generates a new world for each game so every play will be different. Excellent use of Mac graphics and pull-down menus. Macintosh. Circle Reader Service Card #19.

Solar Systems Software
8105 Shelter Creek
San Bruno, CA 94066
(415) 952-2375

TEMPLATES OF DOOM: Having a little trouble mastering those formulas on your Lotus 1-2-3 spreadsheet? How'd you like to have a humorous tutorial which would enable you to play an adventure game and master those formulae at the same time? If so, this program is for you. The player assumes the alter ego of a swashbuckling hero and must pit his knowledge of the Lotus system against the computer in order to succeed. Fortunately, the program has a help menu to assist those who haven't yet mastered the formulae. IBM. Circle Reader Service Card #20.

Strategic Simulations, Inc.
1046 N. Rengstorff Ave.
Mountain View, CA 94043
(415) 964-1353

GEMSTONE HEALER: This is the sequel to the popular Gemstone Warrior fantasy adventure. The warrior has already restored the gemstone to its rightful place, but the Gemstone has lost its powers because the pieces have been damaged. Now, the warrior must return to the Demon's Lair, locate the Healing Tools and heal each part of the gemstone in order to fuse the pieces into a working Gemstone. Those familiar with the previous adventure will recognize the command structure and visual presentation of this new release. Amiga, Apple, Atari 400/800/1200 and ST, C-64/128, IBM, and Macintosh. Circle Reader Service Card #21.

WARSHIP: Gary Grigsby's new game is supposed to be to WWII naval combat what Mech Brigade is to WWII armored conflict. It's a tactical level simulation with Grigsby's usual flair for historical detail. The Ship Data in the documentation is visually splendid, as well as tremendously useful in playing the game (unlike some earlier naval simulations by other companies). As usual, the documentation is jam-packed with detailed charts and statistics. The game includes two scenarios on Guadalcanal, one on Empress Augusta Bay, and one on San Bernardino. You can also design your own scenarios. Apple and C-64/128. Atari version available soon. Circle Reader Service Card #22.

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SHARD OF SPRING™, the new multiple-character role-playing game from SSI, promises an adventure unbounded by the mundane constraints of reality. It is set in a world where magic overrides the laws of physics, where monsters, gnomes and elves outnumber mere humans. Your quest is to recover the wondrous Shard, the giver of eternal Springtime. This precious crystal has been stolen by a demonic sorceress. Assemble five characters and endow them with different combinations of speed, intellect, strength, endurance, and warrior/wizardry skills. Then guide them wisely through evil dungeons and treacherous lands as they search to regain the Shard.

This fantasy game boasts a unique feature: During combat, the tactical screen is an exact zoom-in shot of where you are on the overall map.

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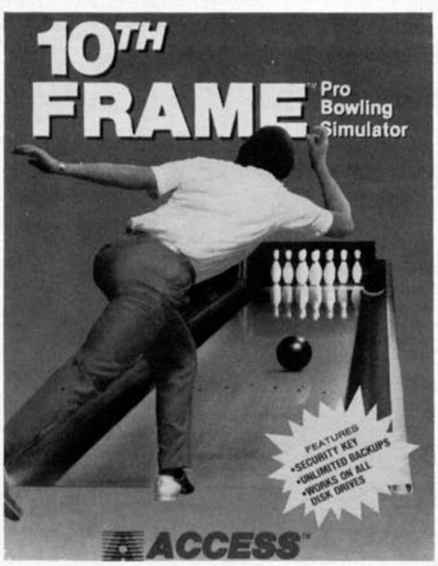
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SSI

by Rick Teverbaugh

There are two new and exciting programs that I am pleased to discuss in this issue. The first game is the much anticipated Tenth Frame from Access. The second game is Radio Baseball from Electronic Arts. The coverage on RB addresses some reader complaints about the lack of IBM programs in this column. Until lately I had only occasional access to an IBM. That has all changed now as a Tandy 1000 now sits comfortably in my office beside the Apple, Commodore and Atari ST machines.

Speaking of the Atari, I am excited about this new machine and what it means for sports gaming. Versatility and graphics are the ST's high points. The increased memory means that the programmers can do more to enhance realism and at the same time still have the room to give gamers many options for self expression like creating your own teams, race courses, golf courses, etc. Then there are the graphics capabilities. All sports are visually stimulating in one way or another. The Atari has the capability of making you feel a part of the action instead of merely being a spectator.



But enough about hardware. On to the sports pages! It's hard to believe but true that there hasn't been a quality bowling game on the market since Intellivision's bowling cartridge. Now Access has done something about that. I've been looking forward to this release since June when I saw a running demo of the game at the Consumer Electronics Show.

Tenth Frame is just as good inside as it looks on the outside. It is possible for up to eight bowlers to play a separate series of games or in a league.

The program is currently only available for the C64/128 systems, but the people at Access say an Atari ST version is on the way.

The game system is quite similar to Access' Leader Board golf game. In the lower right-hand corner of the screen there's a graph with bars moving up and down each side. Pushing the joystick button will set the kegler in motion toward the foul line. At that point, the bar on the left-hand side of the graph begins to climb (slowly at first, but rapidly gaining in momentum). The timing of when to release the button will be the determining factor in how much force is used in rolling the ball down towards the pins.

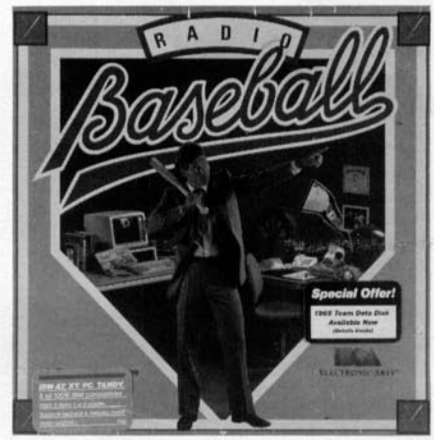
Once the strength is set, the bar on the right-hand side of the graph begins its descent. The timing of the second push of the button is critical is setting how much curve will be used on the shot. While in golf a straight shot is most advantageous, in bowling you'll likely never break 200 without a hook.

As with real bowling, consistency is the byword here. The key to high scores is finding the right combination. That includes the spot the bowler stands to being his approach, the point on the alley to which the shot is aimed, the strength of the delivery and the amount of hook used. Find the proper combination of all four, then hit that combination more often than not and you'll be well on your way to becoming the Earl Anthony of computer bowling.

Up to five games can be rolled at one time and the scores can be printed out after each game. Joystick is mandatory. It is used to position the bowler and to move the aiming arrow as well as putting the shot in motion. Tenth Frame is on my top 10 sports games list of all-time and I think it will be on yours also.

Just when it seems that everybody who can produce a baseball game has already done so, another one pops up. The final two to hit my doorstep have been Sublogic's Pure Stat Baseball, a game too bad to even waste space with here, and Radio Baseball.

Radio Baseball is somewhat similar to Random House's APBA Baseball in a couple of areas. First, there are no graphics to speak of. The presentation in Radio Baseball isn't quite as verbose as that of APBA, but it is generally as effective. A second similarity is the lack of a utility to



create your own players. This seems greedy to me. Why should I pay EA to rate all my teams when my baseball knowledge is likely just as good or better than their's? On top of that, it means they control what teams I get to use instead of me choosing.

But enough of that. Radio Baseball does have quite a few redeeming qualities. The display is pleasant. The screen is divided into three parts. The upper left-hand corner is used to display the linescore, tell what pitcher is on the mound, what batter is up and what runners are on base. The upper right-hand corner gives the complete lineup for each team and not just who's on deck. Since it is necessary to warm up pitchers before you can bring them in, it helps to be reminded, sometimes an inning ahead of time, where the pitcher is in the batting order. If you're playing the wimpy American League designated hitter version it won't matter. The lower half of the screen is for the play-by-play. That also where you'll make your strategy decisions and type in the names of your substitutes.

Radio Baseball doesn't give you as many offensive and defensive options as some games. There isn't any chance of bunting for a base hit, you can't merely bring the corners of the infield in without also bringing them in at second and short and you can't pitch around a hitter.

Another similarity to APBA is the disk access. There are probably three or four disk accesses per hitter.

Radio Baseball does have options to compile stats from a game and to draft players from an already created disk to form your own teams.

The game has two good computer managers. You'll go against Abner in hu-

SPORTS SCOREBOARD

man vs. computer matchups or you can have Alexander, the second computer manager, take on Abner and just wait on the results. There's even an ultra-fast mode for gamers who want the computer to play out some games just to have the results and the statistics. It's a great idea for season replays.

There aren't many teams included on the disk that comes with the game. You'll get four all-star teams; the Pre-War National League Heroes, the Pre-War American League Legends, the Post-War National League Greats and the Post-War American League Stars. Then there are eight other teams; 1927 Yankees, 1934 Browns, 1948 Indians, 1953 Yankees, 1955 Dodgers, 1960 Pirates, 1967 Cardinals and 1968 Tigers.

I can also complain about the lack of information on the player roster screens. It is necessary, in order to do a good job of managing, to keep a constant check on the lineup cards for each team. That's the only place you'll find how the players bat, run and throw.

Overall, I enjoyed Radio Baseball and think it's a worthy entry into the baseball field. With a couple of changes, it could be all-star material.

Quickly there are a few other games I'd like to mention before my space runs out this time. GBA Championship Basketball from Gamestar is now available for the ST. Not only are the graphics greatly improved, but the joystick control seems a bit more stable. There are also coaches to worriedly pace the area in front of the benches. All the other aspects of this Commodore entry have remained intact. All ST cage fans will want a copy.

Also, Lance Haffner has his football game ready for the ST. While it's true that his game can't take advantage of the superior graphics of the machine, it can and does make good use of the ST's speed. Instead of 30 minutes for a full game, you can easily whip one off in 20 minutes, especially playing against the computer. His baseball game is nearly finished and early play-test versions indicate it will be equal to his outings on football and basketball. He's also at work trying to bring hockey, tennis and boxing to the same all-text format. I'll keep you updated on his progress.

In future column s I hope to give you reviews of Baseball Fanatic and World Tour Golf for the IBM. as well as Indoor Games, Equestrian Showjumper, Beach Blanket Volleyball and Thai Boxing for the Commodore.

DRAGONFIRE II

by James V. Trunzo

Name:	Dragonfire II
System:	Apple, C-64, IBM
Price:	$39.95 (IBM); $34.95 (others)
Publisher:	Magicware PO Box 1181 Cambridge, MA 02238



The continued popularity of role-playing games has drawn the attention of more than one computer game company. Many respected software houses have released products that allow you to explore dungeons, journey across entire countries and grow in stature as your experience mounts. Products like *The Bard's Tale* from Electronic Arts, *Phantasie* from SSI and *Ultima IV* from Origin Systems have advanced computer fantasy gaming from a very humble beginning to a much more sophisticated level, one that in many ways closely approximates true role-playing.

However, even the best of the computer fantasy games must, by the very nature of the product, fall short of the actual role-playing experience. A computer cannot cover all the possibilities that exist in an open-ended role-playing scenario whose success depends on the interaction of a group of players and a dungeon master (or referee). Only a well-prepared human referee can be flexible enough to handle the virtually endless number of options at which players can arrive. Nevertheless, that doesn't rule out the use of the computer as a tool for those who will accept nothing less than a true role-playing experience. For those adventurers who fall into that hard-core category comes a product sure to ease the burden of any dungeon master and speed up play for the entire group: *Dragonfire II* (DF2)!

DF2 is not a computerized adventure game; it isn't a game at all. Rather, it is an exceptionally capable dungeon master's aid that will allow the user to quickly and accurately generate characters (player or NPC) or monsters, conduct combat, make dice rolls and do just about anything else that a dungeon master (DM) could want. While similar programs exist on the market, none have come close to exhibiting the flexibility or thoroughness of DF2. There are any number of features in DF2 that make this aid a standout among programs of its type.

To begin with, DF2 makes use of an intuitive user-interface by employing pull-down windows which contain a variety of choices when working with a particular command. For example, dropping the window for the GET command (listed at the top of the screen along with the other major menu items) would allow you to select from one of five options: You could call into the Work Area randomized monsters, new characters, previously organized parties, individual monsters or individual characters. Once characters and/or monsters are called up to the screen, they may be examined, modified, or placed into combat against one another.

Because both monsters and characters can be generated so quickly and because they can be modified with such little effort, DM's or referees no longer need to spend tedious hours creating non-playing characters or large pools of monster types prior to actual play. If an encounter indicates that five orcs suddenly appear, the referee can simply hit a few keystrokes and GET five orcs. Furthermore, each orc can be unique in the number of Hit Points it has as well as in what equipment it is carrying due to the unique randomizing system available in DF2. Understand what this means: no longer will you, as the dungeon master, have to settle (due to lack of time) for five orcs, all with 8 Hit Points, carrying swords. Each orc can be given a randomly generated weapon and have its Hit Points vary within whatever boundaries you so choose.

Additionally, consider the flexibility inherent in using a computerized program with the capabilities of DF2: let's say that a party has just about completed a session and had a relatively easy time of it, in spite of the DM's best laid plans. Normally, there would be little that could be done about the situation—at least not on the spur of the moment and without considerable time involved. With DF2, the DM could decide that while leaving the dungeon, the party encounters a Hill Troll. No Hill Trolls stored on the disk? No problem. Simply se-

lect OPTIONS from the main menu, select CREATE, TEMPLATE, MONSTERS from sub-menus and you're in business.You'll be presented with a list of characteristics pertaining to monsters and after supplying information to the list (5D6 Hit Points, 2d2+2 AC, etc.), you'll be ready to randomly generate a Hill Troll or 10 Hill Trolls.

For those dungeon masters who wish to do everything prior to actual play, you can randomly create specific PARTIES of monsters, either all of one type or mixed, and save them to disk under a special file name for example, ROOM10. Then when the adventurers enter Room 10 of your dungeon, use the GET command first and choose PARTIES, select ROOM10 from the files shown and you're ready for action. The possibilities are many and varied, limited only by the user's needs and imagination.

While the creation of characters and monsters are of prime concern to DM's, of no less importance are the use of special Tables - trap tables, magic tables, treasure tables, and on and on. DF2 allows you to create as many tables as you wish, regardless of type or size. All you need to do is select TABLES from the OPTION list. You are then prompted for the type of table you wish to create (encounter, magic, weapon, saving, treasure, etc), the die role that will be used to make a random selection and the name of table itself. You can even access subtables from within a table. For example, a treasure table could contain an entry that on a roll of 12 would generate another roll to be applied to a subtable entitled MAGIC ITEMS. The computer handles all such mechanics in no time at all.

Again, the type and number of tables is limited only by disk space. You can create specialized tables that are keyed to certain monster types, character levels, dungeon levels, terrain type - whatever you wish.

As previously mentioned, DF2 can handle all combat that occurs during a playing session. The respective groups are placed on screen in the area designated as the Workspace. Next, select the BATTLE option from the main menu at the top of the screen. Designate an attacker and a defender by highlighting the respective characters and monsters on the screen and the program will automatically determine if an attack has hit and what damage has been done. Once combat has been completed, victims may be searched by highlighting one of the dead and using the EXPAND command. By taking possessions from one character and placing them in thee possession field of another, the transfer is made. All combat results (hits, damage, etc.) can be modified or canceled if and when the need arises. This is important once magic enters the picture. Because of the tremendous scope of magic, its awesome number and types of spells and effects, DF2 does not attempt to handle it, although all spells known by a character can be listed with him and spell tables can be created. The casting of spells and their effects, however, must be handled by the players and the referee. The fact that damage can be modified during combat allows for integration in most cases. For example, assume a magic user casts a group damage spell that causes the loss of 5 HP to each member of the enemy force. Simply modify the current Hit Points of each of the enemies prior to any other attacks. A cleric casts a spell of protection over his party, and the spell absorbs the first three points worth of damage scored against a character. Again, no problem. After damage has landed, do not accept the damage rolled. Take it and modify it by three and adjust the character's Hit Points accordingly.

DF2 offers further value when one considers the possible uses of the program beyond what has already been discussed. The fact that any characters, monsters, parties, tables, or templates can be printed means that a computer needn't be available during play if it isn't possible to have one present. It is much quicker to generate large groups of non-playing characters or specialized tables using DF2 ad then printing them out than trying to do the same thing by hand. Hours of dice rolling can be saved by just using a template, putting in the various types of dice you wish to roll and allowing the computer to do the rest. All you need to do is print the results.

Finally, tying in with the comment made above about extra value, DF2 can be used with other role-playing games besides fantasy adventures. The program allows you to change field names and customize your templates (using data disks of course, in order to keep the original program intact). This means that Traveller players could change the character fields into such things as Education and Social Standings, input the correct die roll numbers (1d8) and generate its own characters. Encounter tables could randomly generate mutant types instead of orcs or skeletons. Similarly, Boot Hill fanatics could do away with such fields as Armor Class and ESP ability, replacing them with Gun Accuracy and Speed. DF2 offers its users a chance to escape from the laborious task of bookkeeping and get on with the more rewarding and exciting job of being creative and innovative in the design of the adventure itself. ■

GAME RATINGS

Due to the move that we have just made to larger offices we have had to temporarily suspend compilation of RID data. Therefore we will include the results of RID #32 in our January issue. There will not be a RID #33. Below are the ratings as they appeared in our last issue. Although the number of responses is small, <u>Chessmaster 2000</u> leads the strategy game catagory. <u>Ultima IV</u> continues to lead the Adventure/Action game catagory.

Strategy

Name	Mfg	Machine	Tms Rtd	Avg Rsp	Rating
Chessmaster 2000	EA	Many	1	20	8.10
Kampfgruppe	SSI	C,Ap,At	5	117	7.83
Silent Service	MicPr	C,At	4	108	7.78
Mech Brigade	SSI	C,Ap	4	69	7.55
M.U.L.E.	EA	C,At	14	81	7.48
Battle of Antietam	SSI	C,Ap,At	3	48	7.42
Europe Ablaze	SSG	C,Ap	4	32	7.35
Battlegroup	SSI	C,Ap	2	32	7.34
War in Russia	SSI	Ap,At	7	69	7.33
Star Fleet I	Cygnus	C,At,I	4	35	7.28
Decision in Desert	MicPr	C,At	2	45	7.33
Ancient Art of War	Brodr	I,M	5	30	7.32
Ogre	Origin	Ap	1	19	7.26
Crusade in Europe	MicPr	C,Ap,At	4	84	7.24
Fighter Command	SSI	C,Ap	8	43	7.24
Guadalcanal Camp	SSI	Ap	9	48	7.24
Seven Cities Gold	EA	All	7	118	7.20
Under Fire	AH	Ap	5	24	7.19
Carriers at War	SSG	C,Ap	4	81	7.17
Reach for Stars	SSG	C,Ap	4	50	7.12
Combat Leader	SSI	C,At	5	56	7.11
Computer Baseball	SSI	All	6	36	7.10
Micro Lg Baseball	MicLg	All	6	36	7.09
Heart of Africa	EA	C	3	27	7.09
Galactic Gladrs	SSI	Ap,I	3	32	7.07
Colonial Conquest	SSI	C,At	3	32	7.07
Oper Mkt Garden	SSI	C,Ap,At	4	58	7.06
Flight Sim II	SubLg	C,Ap,At	5	91	7.05
Carrier Force	SSI	C,Ap,At	5	108	7.04
Field of Fire	SSI	C,At	4	72	7.01
Breakthru Ardennes	SSI	C,Ap,At	3	44	6.95
3-in-1 Football	Hafner	C,Ap,I	1	19	6.95
Computer Ambush	SSI	C,Ap,At	5	46	6.93
U.S.A.A.F.	SSI	C,Ap,At	2	26	6.92
NAM	SSI	C,Ap,At	3	24	6.88
Cosmic Balance	SSI	C,Ap,At	5	84	6.83
Bomb Alley	SSI	Ap	4	32	6.82
Gato	SpHb	Ap,I,M	3	79	6.77
Gulf Strike	AH	At	4	33	6.75
Universe	Omtrn	Ap,I,M	3	46	6.73
Knights of Desert	SSI	All	5	63	6.61
Star League BB	Gmstr	C,Ap	2	62	6.60
Halley Project	Mndsc	C,Ap,At	2	24	6.50
Jet	SubLg	I	4	24	6.45
Chickamauga	GDW	At	2	26	6.60
Panzer Grenadier	SSI	C,Ap,At	3	23	6.35
Battalion Cmdr	SSI	C,Ap,At	3	33	6.34
Objective Kurks	SSI	C,Ap	2	44	6.28
Grey Seas/Skies	SimCa	C,Ap	4	20	6.24
NATO Commander	MicPr	C,Ap,At	3	38	5.88

Adventure/Action

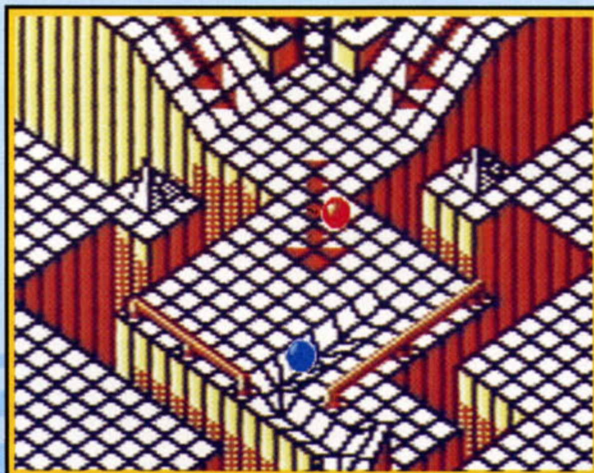
Name	Mfg	Machine	Tms Rtd	Avg Rsp	Rating
Ultima IV	Orign	C,Ap,At	3	83	8.00
Bard's Tale	EA	C,Ap	3	58	7.85
Wizardry I	SirTc	Ap,I	16	73	7.76
Wizard's Crown	SSI	C,Ap	2	22	7.73
Ultima III	Orign	All	10	107	7.64
Elite	Fireb	C,Ap	3	35	7.54
Enchanter	Infcm	All	2	32	7.43
Hardball	Accld	C,Ap	3	26	7.43
Phantasie	SSI	C,Ap	4	75	7.41
Spellbreaker	Infcm	All	3	20	7.34
F-15 Strike Egl	MicPr	All	5	140	7.21
Knight of Diamonds	SirTc	Ap	11	53	7.19
Legacy of Llygamyn	SirTc	Ap	7	58	7.18
Phantasie II	SSI	C,Ap	2	25	7.18
Borrowed Time	Actvsn		1	27	7.15
Archon I	EA	All	10	98	7.14
One on One	EA	All	7	74	7.14
Questron	SSI	C,Ap,At	5	97	7.13
Auto Duel	Orign	Ap	2	29	7.12
Zork Series	Infcm	All	7	122	7.09
Lode Runner	EA	All	6	60	7.07
Sorcerer	Infcm	All	5	58	7.07
Ultima II	Orign	Ap	8	61	7.00
Ultima I	Orign	Ap	2	48	6.96
Deadline	Infcm	Ap,At,I	3	44	6.94
Rogue	Epyx	Many	1	26	6.92
Galactic Advntres	SSI	Ap,At	4	35	6.90
Hitchhiker's Guide	Infcm	All	4	108	6.86
Planetfall	Infcm	All	3	51	6.86
Racing Dest Set	EA	C	3	49	6.78
Moebius	Orign	Ap	2	21	6.71
Wishbringer	Infcm	All	2	42	6.68
Archon II	EA	C,Ap,At	4	76	6.64
Karateka	Brodr	C,Ap,At	3	79	6.64
Suspended	Infcm	At,Ap,I	6	61	6.63
Wrld Karate Chmps	Epyx		1	23	6.57
Mig Alley Ace	MicPr	C,At	3	40	6.55
Alter Ego	Actvsn	Many	1	25	6.52
Suspect	Infcm	Ap,At,I	2	48	6.39
Infidel	Infcm	All	3	52	6.38
Gemstone Warrior	SSI	C,Ap,At	3	76	6.36
Sky Fox	EA	Ap,I,Am	2	107	6.30
Six Gun Shootout	SSI	C,Ap,At	3	69	6.29
Mask of the Sun	Brodr	Ap,At	1	26	6.27
Hacker	Actvs	C,Ap,At	3	41	6.24
Seastalker	Infcm	All	1	46	6.17
Amazon	Telrm	C,Ap,I	1	23	6.13
Witness	Infcm	All	3	43	6.10
Murder on Zinder	EA	All	4	71	6.08
Solo Flight	MicPr	C,Ap,At	2	23	6.04

Go Ahead, Lose Your Marbles . . .

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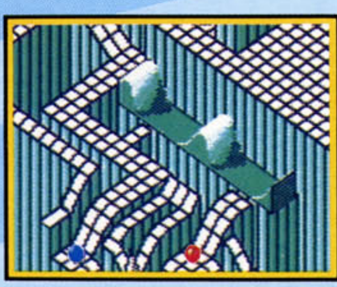
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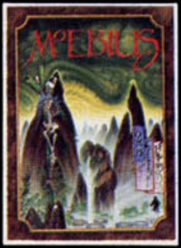
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